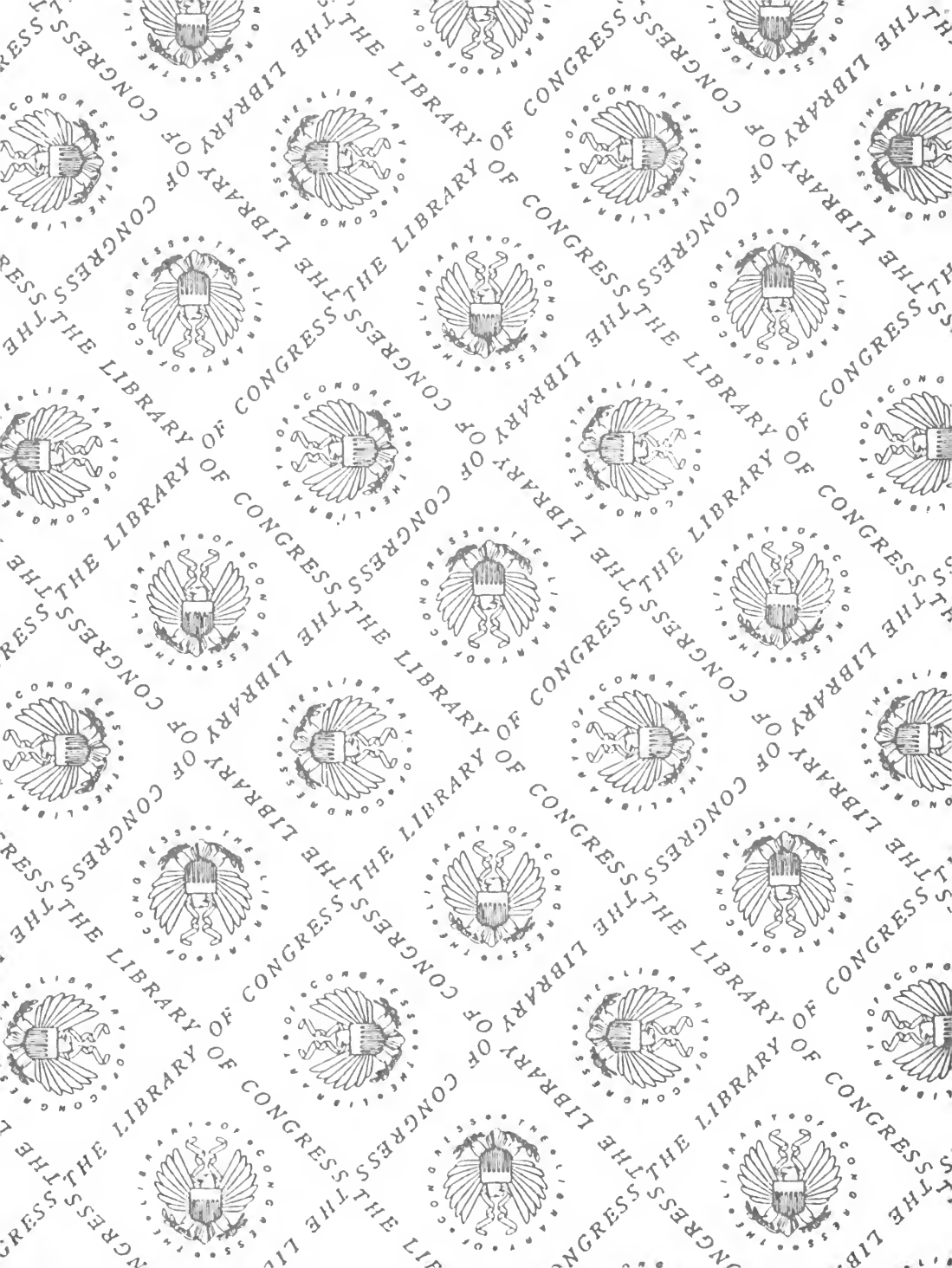
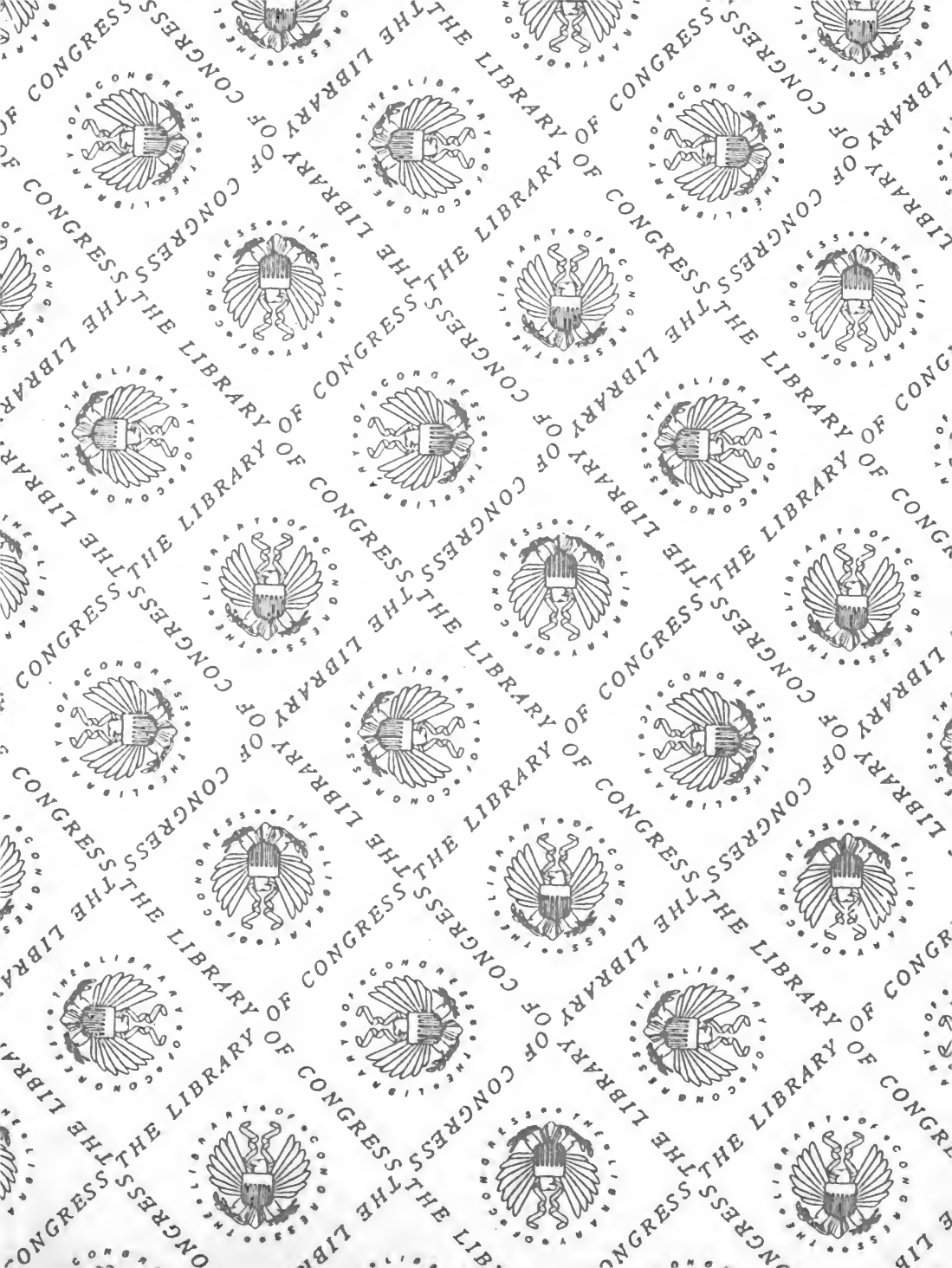


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ALISO AND ACNE.

BY

JAMES A. WICKERSHAM.



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DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

ALSELDO, a rich Islander.

A Captain and two Mates.

ALISO, Prince of Greece.

NEPTUNE, the Ocean-God; also Sailor,
Dwarf and Priest.

ACNE, a Water-Nymph, and daughter
of Alseldo.

HYLAS, a Country Lad.

ARIEL, } Spirits of Air, Earth and
GALIEL, } Sea.
THALIEL, }

PUCK and the Fairies.

JUPITER, with Gods and Goddesses.

Two Workmen.

A Gypsy Woman and Girl.

HYMEN, the God of Marriage.

HÆCATE, an Apparition.

Nymphs, Naiads, Nereids, } Water
River Gods. } Sprites.

Elves, Dwarfs, Gnomes, } Earth's
Smiths. } Sprites.

Stone Quarriers, Reapers, Pruners,
Sailors, Servants, and a Messenger.

SCENE: *First on Mount Olympus; afterwards in a Ship's Cabin at Sea; then
on an Island; last on Mount Olympus.*

THE TOWER

1894

THE TOWER, a collection of poems, by the author of "The Tower of Babel," published by the author.

NEW YORK: 1894.

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ALISO AND ACNE.

ACT I.

SCENE I. *On Mount Olympus. Day. The Assembly of the Gods. Neptune rises.*

Neptune. Most mighty Jupiter!

Jupiter. Pass him the sceptre, he is about to speak.

Neptune. Nay, lofty brother, not so serious; I have a play devised, that needs your aid.

Jupiter. A play! what is more serious than a play? this brings you from your bed, where you are wont to lie on sunny days, when nothing but wind, rain, moon, or storm, can make you climb the rocky way; what is't and by my forehead clouds, I'll help you in it?

Neptune. I propose to build an island.

Jupiter. The project worthies its projector.

Neptune. And to destroy it.

Jupiter. What, hey! so soon?

Neptune. Hear me: I would beget, grow, and endow, an island, to be a bait to lure the world of men; when this is done, I'll set it on a spring and so arrange it, that the foot of a marked year shall trip it up and send it up to heaven, to fall down in the sea again and vanish

Jupiter. Is this all?

Neptune. Not all; the people,—you forget the men and women;—will it be no fun to see them go under?

Jupiter. Good! shall they all go down?

Neptune. That's it; I'll leave one scapeway.

Jupiter. For them all?

Neptune. You go too fast, great cloud-gatherer, and steal the spawn of my particulars, before the fish are hatched.

Jupiter. Great rolling Neptune, you need no rock security, that you can engender a good play; speak the aid that you would have.

Neptune. Give me your clouds, and wind, and storm; bid Iris obey me; send Ceres with her daughter, to swell my island with ripeness; give me sprites, invisible messengers, whate'er I need in the hot boiling of a surging play; send Themis, Venus, Cupid, and Minerva's owl, to take a part, and trust me for the rest.

Jupiter. I like thy words; thou speakest as one who had shook off sleep. Go on; forget us not at the last scene, and crowd into it the gist of all thy argument. It likes me this, we will await th' event. [*Erit Neptune*]. 'Tis a good thought, capital; daughters, trig up in workday dress, and help him; take hold with ungloved fingers, and be ready at he last. [*Exeunt*].

SCENE II. *Night The Interior of a Vessel at Sea. Without, a Storm.*

Enter CAPTAIN, MATES, and SAILORS, with ALISO.

Captain. Out with him; put him overboard; give him to the winds.

Aliso. Will no one have mercy? Look! the lightning is trying to set the sea on fire, and burn it dry; good mercy, gentlemen, set me not out in this storm.

Captain. Ask the waves for pity, and spare your breath to howl with them.

Aliso. Good shipmen, if there be any way to move your hearts, tell me, and I will move them: hear the winds cry destruction; the waves flap against the ship with open jaws to mangle and swallow me; and the thunder is as though it had changed the hollow of the sea to drums, to beat fierce sounds of death; will you cast me out in this?

Captain. Methinks he speaks it well, hey?

First Mate. Good; as good as his dress.

Captain. We'll take both from him, dress and speech; off with his clothes; the dress will stay by the ship, the good words may beg of the storm, and the fine body Nep may dispose of as he pleases.

First Mate. Shall he be lowered stripped?

Captain. Give him a rag.

Aliso. Once more I beg your mercy: send me not out, naked, into this fearful blackness; let the pitiless sea and wind teach you pity.

Captain. Over with him.

Aliso. Flint-hearted men, why spoil my own manliness in beseeching you? Better the wind, the sea, the rocks, than your case-hardened hearts; let me down, and quickly; but turn you an ear, and listen to the winds; they howl your death; the waves that break over the deck are trying to lock their arms around you; vengeance will follow you for this night, and brine and air whip at you, to lash you down; breakers, reefs and hidden rocks consort with the angry waves to let you fall against them; whirlpools and maelstroms suck at you to draw you down; nor secret fires of earth will sleep, nor continents, nor islands keep their quiet places while you in safety roam; some of these will bring you to destruction, if there be justice in heaven.

Captain. Ha, ha! a good pleader: now your mercy, and pity, and compassion; now your fear, and vengeance, and de-

struction; enough, the ship's cranky; I'm tired of this learning; get him over, and have it off our minds; out with him.
[*Exit.*]

First Mate. Come.

Enter NEPTUNE as an old Sailor.

Neptune. Go quietly, and quickly; take this coat for a cover; trust the winds, and be not afraid.

[*They put him overboard and exeunt.*]

SCENE III. *On the Island, within the Cave of NEPTUNE.*

Enter NEPTUNE from the sea.

Neptune. They have the lazier game, that on the mountains
Lie, and sun themselves; here I'm skin wet;
A many leagued swim, that tired my legs!
I've landed them, and here will wait results.
Here take my breath. A delicate resting place!
I scent salt-water still, but here's a spring,
A brook,—the nymph shall keep me company.
This is my tavern, I will rest, and use it.
Yet I'm afraid of Puck: his tricks at night
Make a sea-dweller long for home; I'll bar
My trident in the door, to keep him out.
Here am I, Neptune, turned into a playwright,
To please the Olympians; but more myself.
This is my island, when the sun comes up I'll see it.
Now have I borrowed old Proteus' shapes,
And shall befriend me with them as I can.
Had I arrived an hour earlier,
I would have waked the nymph, to ward off Puck.

[*Sleeps.*]

Enter Puck.

Puck. Now is my choring done: the mares' tails knotted,
Long stirrups braided in their flowing manes,
To bend the curry comb, and fire the groom;
I've visited the housewife's gathering butter,
Loosed the dasher's handle, skimmed the milk,
And clabbered the sweet morning-pan;—and soured
The vinegar's pale mother; alas the work,
That Puck has on a stormy night!—and choked
The cheeping unhatched chickens in their shells;
Now will I rest, and wait my laughs to-morrow.
Heigh, ho! what, who is here? great watery Neptune
Asleep! heigh! quick, the fairies! quick, I'll fly:
Over brier, bush, and thorn,
Will I fly, and toot my horn;
Wild, a hunting hound, I'll yelp,
Calling out the elves for help;
Trolls, that guard the quagmire's light,
Wick the foxfire's flame at night;
Those that punch the firefly's side,
To make him spread his wings awide,
All shall come at my command,
"Neptune, Neptune's come to land;"
In a minute I'll be back,
Leading on the fairy pack. [*Exit.*

Re-enter Puck, leading the fairies.

Puck. Here we are, now sist, be quiet:
Go on tip-toe in our riot.
Neptune, Neptune's come ashore,
See him lie, and hear him snore.
Where begin to fast and fix him?

How bewitch, betroll, benix him?
 Wing-toed elves, that shame the wind,
 Hist, and hark, my mandates mind:
 Fan his hair, and dry and twist it,
 Cautious lest he should resist it,
 Kink and curl it into strang,
 Like stout ropes of sea-weed tang;
 Now fill up his ears with pother;
 Get tickle-grass, his nose to bother;
 Start the fox-tails up his breeches,
 That will give delicious itches;
 Sist, he wakens, quick, be gone;
 Out the lights, come on, come on,
 Back to thicket, bush, and thorn,
 There to lie and laugh, till morn. [*Exeunt.*
Neptune [*awakening*]. The mischief-maker has been here,
 and gone;
 Haste, Phœbus, haste, and drive thy car around.
 How shall I while the night until the morn?
 I'll wake the nymph; she shall come out to me,
 And aid me in my play: Nymphie! Nymphie!
 Hey, come! I call thee; come! I, Neptune, call.
 What words will charm her forth? I'll sing them to her
 On a mussel shell:

Heigh, pouched cheek and mussel shell
 Make the merriest rousing bell,
 With limber tongue;
 On the sides, rose, pink, and pearl,
 Lining many a celly whorl,
 My words are rung.
 She comes, she comes, my words awake her;
 Where she sleeps my tones o'er take her;
 Come! come! come!

Enter NYMPH.

Nymph. What words are these? I hear you, father Neptune.

This is unseasonable; you keep no hours,
But chase th' unsteady moon, and you yourself
Are still unsteadier.

Neptune. Sweet-water nymph,
It might become you to be sweet in taste,
As well as name. I have a play devised;
Come will you play it?

Nymph. O, moon-struck Neptune, I!
Here, in my mossy rock-walled chamber, I,
Night, day, and month, and changing seasons, stay,
With Nymph—cave—kitchen—cares o'er heaped alway:
My spouting faucets and my fountains high,
In lack of care soon shrivel and run dry;
My carpets, floors, and seats, and hanging screen,
Kept off their sprinklings, fade, and lose their green;
Engrossed with duties, such as these, I pray,
What can I know, a simple nymph, of play?

Neptune. I'll teach thee; and to stir desire on,
Tell thee its worth: 'twill so pervade thy soul,
That henceforth e'en the sun will seem to thee
More loveful than thy spring.

Nymph. Impossible!

Neptune. Thou wilt desire to stay and play it ever.

Nymph. Not I, not I.

Neptune. To-morrow it begins.

Nymph. Why, if you will I heed you willingly;
But tell me what it is.

Neptune. Sit here by me;—
You heard the storm?

Nymph. I did, and never saw,

Nor heard a mightier one: from where I stood,
 It seemed rebellion in the waves conspired
 With darkness, to tear down the heavens; and fire,
 The heaven's guard, shot volleys at their heads,
 To drive them back.

Neptune.

This was my storm

Nymph.

Why is it,

Thus you break soft peace with storms?
 Have you no thought, or care, of wandering men,
 Who might exposed be to your fiery play,
 To whom your pastime would be fateful death?
 Briny Neptune, you are my opposite:
 You lure men on to confidence and trust,
 And then you laugh, while you destroy them;
 I change no garment through the changing years,
 But add a sprig of green in Summer time,
 And I to man am ever kind and constant.

Neptune. Now hear me; in this storm there was a ship,
 A brutal captain, and a robber crew;
 And one else; this one they cast away.

Nymph. O, death! in such a night!

Neptune.

No hair of him

Was harmed; I bore him safe, and landed him;
 The ship I racked and seamed and tore in cracks,
 Till many a sieve is much sea worthier;
 The company I've landed on this island,
 Where lives one rich Alseldo; to him they've gone;
 You shall become a maid with human heart,
 As well as human form, and pure as water;
 You mark my words?

Nymph.

They send cold shivers through me.

Once heard I speak of hearts, of human hearts:

'Twas on a Summer day; I lay soft couched

Upon a mossy shelf, beneath the cover
Spread, light-quilted, on my spring; 'twas cool,
Without, 'twas warm; and lying thus, I heard
A voice, and looking up, I saw a face,
Bent down, with eyes that pierced my soul;
I felt a hot breath on my cheek, and shook
And shivered, and lay still; and thus it spoke:
“Dear Spring, O, would my heart were made like you!
You lie so cool and still, and if I touch you,
See your waves soon die, and you are still again;
Or do I stir in you a cloudy rile,
A moment and you are as clear as ever;
Winter and Summer you remain the same,
Though all around you changes; would my heart
Were so! that, touched, retains each impress made;
That holds each raised cloud, to float forever;
That boils now, and now freezes; melts and heats;
Dear, constant, cold, clear, Spring, I would thou wert
The image of my heart,” and then I felt
Hot tears fall on my face; the ripples rose,
And shut away the sight, and when I looked
Again, the face was gone. O, give me not,
Whatever part I play, a human heart.

Neptune. I'll grant thee this: a constant memory
Of what thou now art; then, if at any time
Thou come to me, and cry “I would return,”
Thou shalt that moment a spring maiden be.

Nymph. With this I am content.

Neptune. To this Alseldo
You shall go; on him I'll throw a charm,
To make you in his sight, his daughter;
There shall you be both nymph and child together,
And what more shall the growing play decide.

Here will I stay and watch your cave and fountain,
When the thick, gathering play shall grow,
And darken, choke and sultry your new heart,
Come back to me, and I will set you free.
Meanwhile the naiads, sprits, saucy elves,
Both black and white, shall keep me company,
And sing and dance, and play me what I will,
Upon the moment of monotony;
Bring messages, deceive and lure the players;
And they shall do't, to keep off Puck, or else
I might sleep through the acts; now go, begone;
Remember Neptune, when heart storms come on.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV. *By the Nymph's Grotto. Morning. Acne seated.*

Enter ALSELDO and CAPTAIN.

Alseldo. Was your ship much racked?

Captain. Torn into giblets;

To caulk is to level and smooth down

An island, cracked with earthquakes.

Alseldo. This is the better.

The longer is your stay; I shall be glad

Of your misfortune, that gives me chance to light it,

By showing you my island; the earth is wide,

And spread with goodly fields, but this one spot

Will meet your traveled eye's most fair approval.

Captain. What small appreciation I can show,

A water sailing man, that sees the shore

As good to grow pine trees for tar and pitch,

And salad for our fish, that you shall have.

Is this your daughter?

Alseldo. The same; she loves the water
More than any salt; thus occupied
She's been since girlhood, gazing in the sea;
A most strange fancy seems to follow her;
We've marked it since her childhood: she used to play
About a spring: with willow rods, and leaves
Of spreading dock, there would she build her shades,
And lie in them, and say she was the water's nymph;
And call the water lilies her dear sisters;
Since she's older grown, she walks the shore,
And looks out on the sea, and talks of storms,
And waves and sunshine, and we call her nymph,
To show her water character; see her;
This is her day's delight; let us go near.

Captain. She'll lose this when she loves.

Alseldo. So have I hoped;
But she is cold as summer springs; nothing
Can warm her; not even my affection,
Which she returns, not as a loving child,
But willingly obeys my charges only.

Captain. By're Nep, she's trig and trim; what say you
sir?

I'd have a wife; with your consent I'll woo her.

Alseldo. Worthy captain, I would call you son;
And in your wooing promise you such aid,
As time, or place, or meeting, or occasion,
Lend, together with remove of obstacles,
That may oppose; put on your gallantries,
You know your theme, a watery one, and win her;
Go now and make beginning; I'll soon return,
To show you round the island.

[*Exit.*

Captain. [*Approaching her*]. Sweet miss, I love thee.
Dear duck, look round at me, I'll be thy sea,

Thy pond, thy lily fair,—

Nymph. [*Looking round*]. My mud puddle,
And my stagnant water, my bull-frog and my,—

Captain. Hey! ducky dear, thy father wills it so:
That I be made thy pool, thou swim in me,
And both be called his pond, his son and daughter.
Why do you stare at me?

Nymph. Good rushy captain.
Take you this flower, and bear it to the water;
Don't squeeze it, do not wet it, lay it down
To float upon the waves.

Captain. This will I do.
Though I'm a land wabblers; there it's done.

Nymph. Willows and alders shade the speckled trout;
The elm tree cannot say it shall not be.

Captain. I never learned your land birds.
Nymph. Tell me, my captain,
If you love me, how much?

Captain. More than a salmon
Stewed with vinegar; more than a wind
From aft; than Greek wine, or a Turkish pipe;
More than a yarn at twilight; I love thee more—
Why, onions to scurvy, salt to smelling meat,
Brine to the slimy deck, these are to me thy love.

Nymph. Were you not in the storm?
Captain. Fair dear, why this?
Nymph. I would know of the storm, of last night's storm;
How was it on the sea?

Captain. 'Twas wild; I lay
And drank my wine, and cursed it.

Nymph. [*Turning away*]. Once I lay,—
Captain. Sweet chick,—
Nymph. Where willows grew,—

Captain.

Look round,—

Nymh.

And there,—

Enter ALSELDO.

Captain. Now will I leave you; yonder is your father;
But soon your tune shall change from willow brook,
To sighs and tears of love; I'll have you.

[Exeunt Captain and Alseldo.]

Enter ALISO.

Aliso. What do I see? O, shame! in this attire
I dare not go; yet must I speak to her;
Where could compassion find a fitter home?
O, Themis, goddess, I beseech thee mercy.
No, I will toss a stone to call her here,
Then lie down still, and she will think me dead.

Nymph. What sound? a pebble wet, 'tis from the sea;
Who could have thrown it? yonder is a sink,
That might conceal a mischief-loving boy.
What sight is this? death, rags, or beggary?
Not dead, for sure the pebble came from here.
O, misery! it is some wrecked storm-beaten man;
But is he sleeping?

Aliso. I beg you, gentle lady,
Toss me something to hide my nakedness;
I would not dare address you, but am forced
By harsh necessity; give me some shawl,
Some scarf, and stay with me, till I may tell
But so much of my tale, to awake your mercy;
I swear, by all the round sea-covering heaven,
You will not so disgrace your modesty
By hearing, as your pity, by leaving one;

I am a man by harsh injustice lowered.

Nymph Take this, what would you ?

Aliso. I have been taken by robbers,

Carried out to sea, and set adrift;

Stripped thus of everything, miraculously

I scaped the threatening death, and floated here;

Then did I think to find soft-hearted men,

That might have pity; I crept along the shore,

Until I reached this place, then climbed this hill,

And there I saw the ship, that brought me here,

Lie in the bay; heart-killing sight, more dreadful

Than the storm, or sea, or beggary!

Of all that's here I am most ignorant,

And feared it was some meeting place of thieves;

Then while I lay I saw the captain come,

And heard him urge his suit; your words were cold,

This gave me courage, dear lady I beseech you save me.

Nymph. Near by there is a cave where you can hide,

Until this captain leaves; there I will lead you;

It is a place my father set apart,

And called my own; there you will be secure

Against intruders; within there is a spring;

Here is the entrance; while you're going there,

I will away, and bring you clothes and food.

I soon will come.

[*Exit.*

Aliso.

Sweet storm, dear zephyr blasts,

Mild robbers, gentle lightning fires, I thank you.

Now heaven be merciful, lest this, my presence

Be discovered, and set the tongue of malice,

Wagging 'gainst her: grow these wild island airs

Such flowers, such fruits of maidens? were I a king,

That I might robe myself in gold-lined purples

To meet her coming-back! what will she bring?

Some cast-off coat, some beggar-waiting rags,
And I must wrap myself in these, and hide
And cuddle in a cave, when I would walk
The self of strength, and manliness, before her. [Exit.

Enter NEPTUNE.

Neptune. Now have I left my cave—black solitude,
To view my own play, and to please my mood:
The love I make I'll see in it's beginning,
And watch it through each after out and ining;
Confound these cares, they pester one as flies,
That hum and buzz about a sleeper's eyes;
I'll brush them off, while waiting her return,
That's gone to fetch the fire her heart to burn;
I'll call the spirits out to sing to me;
These tines rule, each, one of the mighty three;
With this I call fair Galiel from the ground,
[Enter Galiel.

This brings the airy Ariel at my sound,
[Enter Ariel.

I touch this third and as a wavy swell
Comes from the sea, comes dancing Thaliel.
[Enter Thaliel.

You come and stand, and wait obediently,
As though expectant of some charge from me;
Were you young kittens, as a wanton boy,
I'd tie your tails, and make your mews my joy;
Or lay a chip upon one spirit's shoulder,
And tarre you on, by calling him the bolder,
That dared to knock it off;—tell of you three,
First, Galiel your superiority.

Galiel. Earth-born spirit named am I,
In velvet buds asleep I lie,
While grows the green;
When a carpet has been laid,
Over it a way is made
For me, earth's queen.

Ariel. While thou liest fast asleep,
High in heaven my watch I keep,
Till down I wing;
When thou comest, idle hummer,
To the green and glow of Summer,
I am its king.

Thaliel. Brawlers, often have I stood,
Watching your indignant mood
And angry ire;
When I will I rush between,
Separating king and queen,
Their great umpire.

Galiel. Ariel, thou art a liar.

Ariel. Galiel, O now, no ire.

Galiel. Who has ever seen you come?

Ariel. He that stood and heard thy hum.

Galiel. Thou would'st make a pretty king.

Ariel. Thou canst ever saucy sing.

Galiel. I will wash the poison oak,
Its killing stem in liquors soak,
And mix the dripping from its leaves
With dew, that to wild ivy cleaves,
And stir them with a jay-bird's quill,
Then an inky oak-ball fill,
And rub it on thy eyes, my king,
This soon will end thy bragging.

Ariel. I will dance about thy head,
While thou liest snug in bed;
All thy poisons will I steal,
Not a poison pang will feel.
Galiel, I'd rub thy cheek,
Its peachy sides are soft and sleek;
By my troth, the buds that bore thee,
Have their down-flour scattered o'er thee.

Galiel. Go back to air.

Ariel. And leave thee here?

Galiel. Thou art a cheat.

Ariel. And thou, my sweet?

Thaliel. Now I hear a storm is brewing,
That will need my quick subduing;
Ariel, Back, alack, alack,
Father Neptune, in a sack
Tie this airy *Ariel*,
And leave alone this *Galiel*.

Neptune. My trident's prongs I now thrust in the ground;
Back to your homes, my chicks, and not a sound.

[*Exeunt Galiel and Thaliel.*]

Here comes the nymph; my *Ariel* stay
A moment here, tell me how stands the play.

Ariel. The captain's with *Alseldo* gone,
To view the island they're upon;
The nymph would fain *Aliso* save,
And thus has hid him in her cave;
Now she returns to bring him cheer,
Soon will they be together here.

[*Exit.*]

Neptune. Here will I lie and watch the coming scene.
Here is the nymph; ho, ho! what does she bring?
Sist, now, what does she say? I cannot hear.

Enter NYMPH.

Nymph. Are you within? here are sweet fragrant soaps;
There's water in the spring to wash the brine,
And yellow foam and sand off of your shoulders.
Soft sponges grow within; they are my pillows;
One may you pull and use; but not the rest;
I pity their weak lives. Would I might send
Some servant to your bath! but that's detection.
Dear sir, here is a shirt myself have made;
'Tis softest linen; I hemmed for my brother;
It is almost too good for any man,
But I could find no other; and here, take these,
And listen, while I tell you where I found them.
You hear me, sir?

Aliso [*Within*]. Dense darkness grows twice thick,
That I may hear all and see none.

Nymph. By chance
I thought me of a chest, where lay
Suits old in during, but unworn, and made
To wear at balls and masks; thence have I chose
A sailor's suit; 'twill aid you in escape,—
O no! you'll long be here; the captain's ship
Is torn to giblets, and must be repaired,
And while he's here you are my prisoner.
Make haste, I long to see you, and hear your story.

Neptune. A story, would a play need have no stories!
I wish I had a pillow, cushion or sponge,
To lay my head upon. I'd see a fight,
Or dance a wake, or visit funerals,
To see fair maidens weep, but not a story,
Loves anticipation only; O well,
I must endure it.

Enter ALISO.

Sure this fountain's water
Has been caught from heaven in lily cups;
A bath so fine
Earth-creeping water could not give
I feared th' apparel, you would bring, might best
Be suitable to wrap a beggar in;
This is a royal garb; I might have asked
In modesty a meaner one.

Nymph.

Too poor!

I've heard it said, that suffering wandering men
Are dear to Jove; may he be lenient,
That I from spider covered chests have given
What should have been new cut!

Aliso.

May heaven requite thee!

Nymph. Now would I hear thy tale.

Neptune.

Spin her a yarn

Aliso. It shall be short.

Neptune.

Thank heaven! I hate a calm.

Aliso. I cannot urge my thoughts to fly away;
They hover round this cave; yet must I tell thee,
I was not made to whistle plaintive airs,
To entice a penny from a passer by,
And less, to lie a stall-fed dainty son,
To some rich nobleman; how shall I tell thee?
I would not boast, nor would I dull and spoil
My tale with modesty; I'll tell it simply:
My father is the ruling King of Greece;
His head was growing white,
Age-weakness slow approaching; already once
He had besought me to relieve and free him
Of his weight of state; I was not loth,
And answered "I will prepare myself;"

Then left my country, to see other lands and men,
Till, tossed upon the sea, and scorched upon the land,
At last I have come hither. Is this enough?

Neptune. A full-moon tide of plenty! any sailor
Could tell a better of murders, ghosts, and witches.

Nymph. If I perceive a halt, or lack or hitch,
In this, your telling, you shall begin again,
And tell it double. You left your fatherland,—

Aliso. And sailed, if you would hear of toils and battles,
Scapes and accidents, hunger and thirst,
Things suited more to please a workman's ear
Than yours, dear maid, three years upon the sea;
From the which time what I tell you must,
With your best leave, be made all general,
And all events lose with themselves relation.

Neptune. Bah! a ragazzo could begin it better.

Aliso. Many lands we saw, inhabited
By wild fierce men, we scarce dared look upon,
Whose customs made us shiver to the heart;
Strange burials we saw: some heaped with fire;
Some laid on lofty towers, the food for vultures;
Some hid on shelves in gloomy catacombs,
Where friends might come, and turn the tired body;
Some in the rivers were cast out; and some
Were laid for ghouls to eat, others for worms,—
You shiver; I feared my tale might fright you;
I will not tell it; yet I thank misfortune,
That gave me scars and rags, for you to pity.

Neptune. Now that's intolerable: this breaking off,
This that and that, as though men had but eyes;
Were I a nymph, he'd get ebb-love from me.

Nymph. 'Twere better not to visit such fierce men;
But tell me more, all, I would know it all.

Do not stop when I shudder; I will not flowers alone,
I'd know of scars, and struggles, hardships,
Endurance long and wearing, of strength and courage,—
I have 't, I'll make your scars your chapters' index:
Here, this one on your forehead, where got you that?

Neptune. Most excellent! now give it up, and say
You never told a story in your life.

Aliso. That, do you see it still? I thought that vanished;
That's from the first year, but a little wound;
We landed on an island,—

Neptune. Now good, go on.

Aliso. 'Twas in the night. For many days we'd sailed
Upon a landless sea, our food was gone.
We could not sleep for hunger thirst and cold.
We saw a light, and I with two companions,
[*Neptune shows interest.*

Left the rest on guard, and went toward it.
Long we scrambled through the thorns and stones,
Among ravines with rushing mountain streams,
On slippery hills and dangerous precipices,
And came at length, where lay and shone the fire;
Then carefully approached, and round it saw
Red painted men, with forks held in their hands,
And on them human flesh, baked hands and hearts,
Feet, legs, and heads! the sight was horrible;
We grasped our swords, and rushed upon the men,
And when the morning came, and we returned
Their victors, I found upon my face the wound,
That left this scar.

Neptune. Short, but not so bad! the cabin boy,
No, the forecastle boy, might do no better.

Nymph. O, dreadful but to hear it; to live it, death!
Is't not too terrible to tell again?

Neptune. Bah! that is fish milk to a sailor's yarns.

Aliso. Dear lady, I would gladly tell it you,
But that I fear it be too coarse and rough,
And that it hath withal a boastful sound.

Nymph. Then will I find one more, and beg you tell it;
If maidens are unfit to carry scars,
They best can pity them, when nobly won;
This one, tell me how this one came, and where.

Aliso. This one was given by an accident:
Long had we sailed about a northern coast:
Now wedged between great floes of floating ice,
Now running 'gainst an iceberg, hurtling high.
Now landing on the shore, to find the men
Strange creatures, muffled in thick wild-beast furs,
And riding, like the wind, on crusted snow,
Drawn by moss-eating reindeer, wonderful!
Until, worn out by cold and drifting snow
And ice and frost, that make a northern clime,
We turned our ship toward a southern sea,
And sailed until our skins, once bleached and white,
Now grew as tawny as an island Greek;
Here long we coasted among many lands;
Now putting in this bay, now anchoring
About this promontory, now disembarked
Where long-haired robber men
Eat wrinkled olives, the poor plums of earth,
And hoe among bare blocks of marble rock,
To find a sustenance, themselves as happy
As the earth's rich kings, and thus we learned
New thoughts of men and life, until at last
We came one morning where a broad deep bay
Flashed out at us, lit up with glow of fire;
We wondered, till we saw behind, a mountain,

And from its summit stretched a smoke-like cloud,
That beat and pulsed with flames of reddish fire,
And at its base it flashed, as though the earth
Were turned into a bellows blowing through
This mountain pit, to heat and weld the heavens.

Nymph. O, wonderful!

Neptune. O, mighty story-teller!

Aliso. Thence came the flame we saw upon the water.
Would you hear more, dear lady?

Nymph. Tell on, tell on.

I trust you did not near this fearful fire.

Aliso. My curiosity was strong and led me.

I called my comrades but they all refused,
And begged me not to go; at last I urged
By gifts entreaty and persuasion too;
With these I climbed the mountain, through ashes, cinders,
And hot falling sparks, until I reached
The crater's very edge; then leaned my head
Out over the abyss, and with my hands
I shaded thus my eyes, and while I peered
Down in the blackness, lit with flashing flame,
The edge gave way beneath me, and I fell.

Nymph. O, horrible!

Neptune. Good, by Jove, what next?

Aliso. I cried aloud, and thought my minute come,
To bid farewell forever to the sun;
But at that moment came a fiery belch
From the deep bowels of this monster mountain,
And filled the shaft with rushing air, and stones,
And fire, and lava, and it bore me up,
As harsh misfortune often lifts a man
And raises him far higher than before,
High in the air above the opening,

Then turned me carefully aside, and down
I fell and slid along the ashy slope
Unharm'd, with but this scar.

Nymph. Thank God, thank God!

Neptune. Now thunderer, find out in all your realm,
A bigger monster than a fiery mountain,
And I'll blow up another storm, to find
A mightier story teller. You are a kitten:
Wink on, the tenth day will your eyes be open.

Aliso. Dear lady, this does wonderfully touch you.

Nymph. Is the earth so wide, so full of wonder?
I used to think, as I sat by my spring,
The only strange thing was the orange tree,
That grew beside me; this seemed to me
Earth's great variety: I oft have thought
The orange chased the blossom, and the bloom
The orange, just as though the tree grew tired
Standing there, and tried to vary thus,
With waxy flowers, and yellow fruit, and scents
Of leaves and buds and bloom and oranges,
Its dull monotony; but now I see
Its life was little to the world's, as mine
To yours; and yours how great! and mine how little!
But tell me how you lost your ship and comrades;
How you were seized by robbers, and escaped
The dreadful storm; and tell me of your father,
That noble man, that generous king of Greece.

Aliso. This will be brief. We landed on an island,
A fairy Grecian island, which it seemed
That heaven and earth and sea conspired together
To make the fairest lotos-land of earth.
There had we disembarked, and tarried, charmed
Into forgetfulness of other lands;

Sweet lady, would I could but tell this charm!
It seemed all things were made to drive out memory
Of everything not of the passing moment,
And not, as in all other lands, to fill the soul
With longing of what's past, and what's to come:
There when the day came we forgot the night,
And when the night came on, we knew no longer
That ever day had been, night so entranced us;
There everywhere was rest: no more we might
Be named weary men; we strolled on shores
Where every spot seemed like a couch at morn,
So loth were we to leave it; and on the hills
Fruits vied with flowers, to languish and entice us;
The trees sweat sweetest balsam from their barks,
And spicy herbs invited us to crush them
For their fragrant odors; there sleep was banished,
That no time might be taken from life's pleasure,
And not a flitting dream e'er passed before us,
To drop a mist upon the present joy;
E'en memory grows confused in recounting it,
And mixes and destroys particulars;
In this intoxication of delight,
I went alone and sat far from my comrades,
By the shore; a ship came on, and stopped;
I saw the approaching boat and robber crew,
But still I moved not, till they came, and seized
And bore me off, and then the charm was broken;
I called to my companions; they heard, and gathered,
Quickly took to ship, and followed us;
Day after day, week after week, I saw
Their sail upon the horizon of the sea;
Till when at last it turned, and went away,
I knew, disheartened, they had gone to Greece.

To tell my aged father his son was lost;
Then came the storm, and blew such fearful blasts,
That frightened these pale superstitious hearts,
Until they set me out adrift. Lady,
This is my tale. My father mourns for me,
And knows not where to send his baffled barks,
To search this desert sea.

Nymph.

Sad, O, so sad!

Neptune. And fearfully foolish! were I a telling yarns
To some cave-mermaid, I'd not make her weep.

Nymph. I would I were your father's subject,
For then when you return, you'd be my king;
Tell me, are you like your father?

Aliso.

'Tis said

I am in this respect of outward form
His very reflection.

Nymph. Would I might see your father!
It must be he's the lion of all men.

Aliso. Would I had but a raft and broken blade,
Or any sun-warped punch, and you should say
You'd be my queen, I'd sit at th' stern in sun,
And night, and storm, and make my hands my oars,
But that I'd bear thee safely to my kingdom,
And make thee my proud queen.

Nymph.

O, death! there comes

The captain, and my father; now you must in,
And sit alone in darkness; were I the sun,
I'd slight the fairest ripening peach, to shine
Upon the unanswering rocks of this, thy cave.

Aliso. O! must I leave thee? this robbery,
That steals thee from me, shames all other thefts,
And makes them little.

Nymph.

Go, go, I will return.

Aliso. Haste thy return; here will I sit, and count
The trickling drops of water, and say each one
Does make me so much nearer thy dear coming-back.
My queen, what may I name thee? I would tell thy name
To every echoing cuppy hollow of this cave,
And set them all to whispering it back to me.

Nymph. This one thou hast invented;
Methinks this is the best: my Queen, my Queen;
'Tis not so cold as Nymph, the name my father calls me;
And much more meaningful than Acne,
My own right name; I would the echoes might
But answer thee 'my Queen.'

Aliso. I'll call thee Queen
And Love and all the others of like minds,
Our little alphabet contains; when these are used
I will invent new hollow words,
And fill them with a thousand new love-meanings.

Nymph. Go, go; stay; I will search the kitchen, pantries;
Cupboards for thy meal, and feign a sickness,
Urging them to make me dainty dishes,
To bring them here to thee. With kisses warm
I know to bribe a lad, to search the island;
Bring me sweet hawes, thorn-apples, those that grow
On rose-briers for thy sauce;—quick, quick! they come;
My king, my king!

[*Exit Aliso, urged into the grotto.*]

Enter CAPTAIN and ALSELDO.

Neptune. Why, this is well worked on; with tales and love,
A hidden lover and a vulgar captain,
A play will play itself; soon shall I be
A useless listener.

Alseldo. Daughter, 'tis time
Thou leave thy sea and cave, I've other thoughts
And cares invented for thee; come, Acne, come.

Nymph. Dear spring, and grotto, sea, and all that hears
Your murmuring and trickling water sounds,
Farewell; I come again; farewell, dear grotto.

Alseldo. Be not so certain thou wilt come again,
Daughter, this fancying of thine did well
Become a child, and formed a pleasing pastime;
I bid thee now forget it; and aiding this,
I call thee no more Nymph, but Acne.
Come, we leave the sea; thou shalt elsewhere
Thy hours beguile.

[*Exeunt Alseldo, Captain, and Nymph.*

Neptune. Now will I leave them, this play
Needs Neptune no longer. I'll lie and snore.
What is a love? the commonest fiddler plays
And sings a tale of love; but whisper I,
And start a play, and everybody knows
Where o-v-e will follow.

[*Exit.*



ACT II.

SCENE I. *A room in the house of ALSELDO. Enter two workmen to ALSELDO.*

Alseldo. I have sent for you.

First Workman. And we have tramped the heels of your call.

Alseldo. Do you know the Nymph's Cave?

First Workman. That one by the shore, with the spring in it, and the orange tree by it?

Alseldo. The same; I perceive you understand to what I refer; I wish that cave destroyed, for a particular reason, to know which would not make your picks strike harder blows: I would have it blotted out, which is not to say I would have it dug up, which might be too great a job for you, like climbing a tree and pulling the roots up after you, unless you call the sea in to help you.

Second Workman. I understand: you want it leveled: the walls mashed in and out, the top put on the bottom, and the bottom and the floor left alone.

Alseldo. You do rightly know my intending in this matter; but add this: a spring has roots and veins and branches; now I would have you pull up this spring by the roots, and throw it all into the sea, so that not a seap shall make a spot of blue clay fresh, where this water was; you understand, I would have cave and spring, so to speak, razed, and the place smoothed over, and shaved grass growing on it.

First Workman. Your orders are as clear as an unriled spring after you've put muck in it: how can you kill a spring? you cut it down ten feet into the ground, and some root will bud and get to the sun.

Alselo. Drain it into the sea, and let it mix with the brine before it does with the air. Away, do the work quickly and thoroughly. Hold! cut the orange tree, and cast it in the sea.

First Workman. It shall soon be done.

[*Exeunt First and Second Workman.*]

Alselo. Thus will I blot each slightest reminiscence.
Of her early days, and turn her thoughts;
Make force my good physician, kill the cause,
And hasten on the cure; she shall forget.

Enter ACNE.

I will not tell her; I'll make it a surprise
Hereafter.

Acne. When will this captain go?
I have a secret I would tell you then;
Until then let me keep it.

Alselo.

What secret, *Acne*?

Acne. Now I cannot say; but,—
Keep me not from my spring, and I will try,—
Yes,—to forget my nymph-like character,
For which you have so oft upbraided me,
And love, or try to love; the process slow,
But when this captain goes, why then, O, then!—

Alselo. How now! your eyes are little fires;
Is't thus you glow at th' thought of losing him,
Who soon will be your husband? then know this:
The captain leaves to-morrow, and has urged
With such of vehemence his wooing suit,
That he at last has won my willing grant,
To take you with him; there, upon the sea,
You quickest best will learn what's human love.
When you return, a short sea voyage done,
You will not miss your spring; it is my will

You go not near it.

Acne.

Yes, but,—

Alseldo.

No more of this.

Go now make preparation to depart.

[*Exit.*

Acne. I would I could have told him.

To-morrow, with this captain! back, to-morrow:

Turn thy course, O time, and be all day,

That I may never see that dread to-morrow.

I am forbid to see my cave; here will I sit,

And change to yellow-eyed despondency,

Until they hate me, loathe me, leave me free,

While he sits in the darkness, lone and hungry?

No, disobedience is obedience here;

I'll love thee more, and think in that I'm dutiful.

The boy shall bring me berries, fruits and flowers;

I will forget to-morrow. Hylas! Hylas!

Enter HYLAS.

Thou art a pretty boy, I like thee, Hylas.

Hylas. Yesterday you called me baby, booby,

When I tried to kiss you; I'm no bigger now;

You call me boy? call me a man;

I am as high as you, and you're a woman.

Acne. Thou art a man, a giant pigmy man.

Come here, I'll kiss thee; there now we are friends.

I'll give thee more; why, two, three, four,

What more could'st ask? come, wilt thou hear me speak?

Hylas. Will you hunt berries with me?

Acne.

No, not to-day;

I'm sad to-day.

Hylas.

Why, then, I'll go alone.

And get them for you.

Acne. Will you, my dear, good boy?
I would you knew where grew the prettiest flowers.

Hylas. I know them all: their colors, shapes, and sizes;
I know their breaths, if they be sweet or bitter,
Spicy, or such as make one sick and languish;
Their stems I know, and I can tell their juices,
Whether they draw and pull the tongue together,
Pucker the lips, and make you look sour,
Or whether they will bite and prick it.

Acne. Oh, yes! I see you know them.

Hylas. And some have juices,
That will make your cheeks as red again:
Paint-root,—I'll make a brush of basswood bast,
Drawn through the celly comb of some dried hornet's nest,
And wrapped about a jointy rush, its handle,
To paint thee with;

Acne. O, no! I'll not be painted.

Hylas. I know where grow the purple lady-slippers,
With silver buckles, and with golden tongue;
These will I string upon a smilax vine,
And put red coral buds of bitter-sweet
To hang between them, and I'll take a cross
Of plush and silver from Jack's turnip pulpit,
And hang it on this string, and give it thee,
To wear around thy neck, and then we'll play
That I'm thy priest,—

Acne. O, no! this will not do.

Hylas. What shall I bring? could I but climb the tree,
I'd bring thee dried balls from the sycamore.

Acne. No, no! I'm hungry; seek me with thy taste
Some pretty things.

Hylas. I know a mossy bank,
Where busy chip munks hide their beech-nut store;

There will I dig, and widen out their door,
And while the chatt'ring monks are off at play,
I'll steal their store and carry it away;
Thy table will I spread on velvet moss,
Bring spikenard sticks in mussels for thy sauce,
And steal the yellow young dove from its nest,
Build me a fire, and cook for thee its breast;
The lush may-apples, from the thickets dark,
I'll bring, on sun-curved plates of hickory bark;
All that a man can find on ground or tree,
I'll get, if thou wilt come and play with me;
Shells, chiseled by a squirrel's tooth, shall hold
Spring water for thee, crystal clear, and cold;
O, come then to the woods, and play with me,
And I will gather all its joys for thee.

Acne. I cannot go, dear Hylas, bring me these;
Go fetch them for me, and my mood thou'lt please;
Go gather, and bring hither to my cave,
What pleases taste or sight, that wild woods have;
There will I meet thee when an hour is gone,
And take them from thee, as thy boy-love pawn;
Now go, dear boy, here, here, I give thee kiss,
Such as no other lad e'er got from other miss.

[*Exit Hylas.*]

What's care to me? I love; my heart is warm;
O, Neptune, I do thank thee for thy storm.
Once thought I that a cold and crystal spring
Brought sweetest joy, that earth or life can bring;
But in a heart there is a joy can move
And push aside all else, the joy of love.
Would I had Hylas' brush! my cheeks I'd stain;
O, I am nature's fright, and paint is vain;
I'll find my nurse, and she shall answer me

If I am fair: nurse! nurse! why should I ask?
I know she'll tell me ay; sure every day
She's flattered me since memory's beginning;
No, I will bid her stay; he called me queen;
O! I am beautiful; what he calls queen,
That must be fair; my glass is queen and queen;
I'll look in it; I do not see my face,
I see alone the glass, that called me queen;
Dear glass, would I might look in thee forever!
My wanderer, soon, soon, I'll be with thee,
To hear thee tell tales by my cave and sea. [Exit.

SCENE II. *By the Nymph's Grotto.*

Enter two Workmen.

First Workman. This is the place; now by ye gods, a man would think this place hid sulphur springs and stinky gases, scents foul to the nose and dangerous to the lungs, by the way he ordered us tear it down; but here's an arbor of a place. Folks that have their bread and butter soon quit working and tear down what they've made. Curse me but I believe a man should always swing a pick; then he'd know what cool water and a cave is. Give a wheat field too much manure and the wheat falls down and rots. Now here, this grotto's a little parlor, this ground's a down bed to my legs, but a rich man, wugh! a man, that don't swing an ax, or a pick, or a shovel, would make a turning-wheel of the world, and mix up everything, and change 'em all every five minutes. [*Aliso looks out.*] Now this Alseldo's sent us to dig down this grotto, because he wants a grass yard, next he'll want a park, then he'll most likely want a grotto again; well, we get his dollars;—now to 't. But first the tree!

[Cuts down the orange tree.

Second Workman. This is his daughter's resting place: she sits here, rests here, lies here and naps here; she'd leave a garden full of strawberries, to come to this cave. Most likely her dad's miffed, and takes away this sugar plum.

Aliso. What shall I do? to lie here is to be crushed;
To run is to be seen, and bring a troop
Of scandal tongues, to howl about her ears;
To spring upon them is alike detection;
It seems this is her father's spiteful work.
What, must I thus, like some dog-chased rat,
Hide in a pile of boards, to be unhoused,
And set on, hissed and bit? were I a king
In power and not in name, I'd seize this maid,
And blow this little puff-ball island up.

First Workman. Here is a corner, that supports the rest.
Knock out this cobble and the top will go;
The rest is easy. Here, tear this away;
'Twill make a crash; I like to see it fall.
Come, give a hand: here pull this flagstone out;
Some one has thrust it in here for support.

Aliso. Now must I blind them and escape unseen;
How do't? here, spring, lend me your aid again:
I'll fill this sponge with water, gravel, sand,
And cast it in their eyes.

[*Exit.*

First Workman. Now pull away:
Ho, ho! ho, ho! a sailor pull, a tug,
Now, now! the devil! the devil!

[*ALISO throws the wet sponges in their faces. The stone comes loose. The Workmen fall on their backs. Aliso crosses the stage.*

Aliso. Now, did I think they saw me, by great heaven,
I'd cast them in the sea.

[*Exit.*

First Workman.

Hey, are you here?

Second Workman. I'm more than here: I'm here with double weight; my eyes trippled with sand; my hair quadrupled with gravel, and my clothes tenupled with water.

First Workman. What was it?

Second Workman. I only know what I heard you say: I heard you call out "the devil, the devil;" I think you were right.

First Workman. A fearful crash!

Second Workman. And splash!

First Workman. And smash!

Second Workman. And noise!

First Workman. Whip me, I thought I had jumped head first into a well, and gone to hunting crawfish with my eyes in the sand.

Second Workman. Wonderful likeness! I thought I had plunged into the sea, and was trying to butt a pearl oyster off the rocks with my head among the sponges.

First Workman. I looked up to see if it was raining.

Second Workman. And I looked round afraid of sharks.

First Workman. And as I raised my eyes, I saw two hands with sponges in them, and then I cried the "devil," and looked round to see what you were doing. What did you see?

Second Workman. I thought I saw,—

First Workman. Never mind what you thought you saw; I thought, you thought; I thought, you thought,—thought is nobody and nowhere; well, what did you make of it?

Second Workman. I didn't make well of it; I made the sea; you made a well.

First Workman. Come now, in my opinion this cave is haunted.

Second Workman. Was haunted you mean; it's a ghost itself now.

First Workman. I believe there was a two-armed ghost of flesh and blood in that cave; if I could reason, I would prove it; as it is I'll prove it with wet sponges torn up, with sand and water scattered in bunches, and with the miraculous coincidence of our two similar visions.

Second Workman. I was pretty well convinced of your conclusion before you began to reason, and I believe it.

First Workman. Do you sit here and watch, and I will try my argument on Alseldo. In my advice you would do well to keep a wet sponge by you; that seems to be the instrument he uses, and they say fight the devil with his own weapon.

[*Exit.*

Second Workman. A most strange grotto! If I had a fat body, and this were a cannibal island, I'd think a trap had been set here to catch me, that they might make hams of me. Hey, who comes next? Some one not ordered I surmise.

Enter ACNE.

Acne. Jump, heart, and skip and frolic, you're a lamb;
Soon will you find your meadow and your shepherd.
The sun's new-polished; I never saw'm so bright.
I would the boy were here now with his flowers;
Dear Hylas, scratch thy cheek with briars and thorns,
To make thee haste; here, in these dainty sweets,
I'd stick thy flowers and leaves; thou should'st be here;
Had I gone on thy errand, to gather flowers,
To crown my love, long, long had I been back,
And kissed my perfect wreath upon his brow;
I cannot wait for thee. What, are you here?
Dear man,—O heaven!

[*Drops the dish.*

O what! O what! O what!

Quick, quick! away this rubbish; here is life,—
 No death; here, here! life, life! come man, and dig;
 Come throw; come pull this clear; why stump, why log,
 Hast grown fast to the ground? come here I bid thee.

Second Workman. Those that do unordered can undo;
 I am a tool, a stick, with so much life
 To act as I am ordered.

Acne. Heaven! O, heaven!

Speak, were you ordered to destroy this cave?

Second Workman. I was.

Acne. By who?

Second Workman. Your father.

Acne. Heaven! O heaven!

And he is dead, crushed, mashed, and covered up.

O death! O death! O trap! O cunning snare!

Second Workman. Your father is not dead.

Acne. Away, begone,—

No, stay; I'd question thee. [*Aside.*] Perhaps, may be,

Might it not be, and then a single ask

Would spoil it, and kill it. Tell me for I must know,—

Enter HYLAS.

Hylas. Here are the berries and flowers and apples.

Acne. Boy, dear boy, here, keep them; see, they're
 withered.

[*Aside.*] Can it be he did escape unseen?—

They're bitter, sour. [*Aside.*] No, no, that could not be.—

Why did you stay so long? you came too late.

[*Aside.*] No, he is buried, dead. Put down your flowers;

The leaves are black and mildewed; what, you cry?

Dear boy, I'll cry with thee: come let us sit

And weep awhile together. Here tear these leaves,

And scatter them about that broken plate.

Hylas. O Acne! Acne! I got the best I could.

Acne. Dear boy, you did. Come, sit and weep with me;
A while ago I wanted pretty things,
Now I would have all sad ones. Do you know?—
O, see, they've cut my orange tree; 'tis dead;
Poor orange tree, 'tis dead, 'tis dead; dead, dead;
And lies heaped up with mud and stones and water,—

Hylas. No, here it lies; it's dry; I'll plant another;
I know a thicket where there's nothing else
But orange bushes, and I'll plant thee one.

Acne. No, get a cypress; plant me a cypress tree,
To grow up dark, and bend and shake and quiver,
And fear and sigh and moan, and tell sad tales,
Of death, and broken hearts, and lovers killed,
Crushed, while their hearts were warm with hope, and love,
And I will sit beneath its shade, and wet
And cool it with my tears. O, get a cypress.

Hylas. I will get it now.

Acne. Hylas, O come,
'Come, go with me to search about the island,
To find sad plants; thou know'st the island, Hylas?

Hylas. I know each crack and cranny, rocky cleft,
Each nook and hiding-place, that's big enough
To shut a rabbit in.

Acne. Come, Hylas, come:
I'll go and hunt with thee along the shore,
In every cave, and hollow, where the shadows
Lie upon the ground. No, leave the flowers.
'Come, let us go.

[*Exeunt.*

Second Workman. At first I thought she'd dance;
'Then next, that she would personate a whirlwind;
Another second, and I feared a flood,

But e'er the first salt sprinkles fell, she'd gone.
Strange, strange! the world is full of mystery:
All caves and dens with visions, sights, and ghosts;
The head with dreams; and even coffee settlings
In a cup are full of prophecy.
It's past all finding-out. Now in a spring,
That such a ghost could hide,—

Enter ALSELDO, FIRST WORKMAN, and CAPTAIN.

Alseldo. And as it fell you saw, or thought you saw, some one spring out,—

First Workman. Both of us saw the same; both of us felt the same wet sponges and water, just as it fell, on the very corner of the same moment in which the cave fell in.

Alseldo. Some one was hid here: some strolling beggar, crept in to drink and rest.

First Workman. I thought he might come back, and left my fellow here to watch. Hey, have you seen him? did he come?

Second Workman. No he came; but a she, a maid, your daughter, came like a storm, sir, a summer storm, sir, that blows and whistles, like a boy with candy in his pockets, and then gets furious, and tears around like mad, then rains, and goes off on the other side.

Alseldo. The tongue is by far the biggest part of this man; talk straight awhile. Has my daughter been here?

Second Workman. Been, sir, and laughed and ordered, wept and gone.

Alseldo. I forbade her come here. If what you say be true, this hath a dip of suspicion on it.

Second Workman. She came as though she had a pet dog in this cave, and brought this dish to feed him on; the cracks were put in it by her eyes.

Alseldo. No man on earth can understand this fellow.

Second Workman. Why, she held the plate in her hand, and if she had been blind, she would be holding it still; but she looked at this cave knocked in, and the dish split at once; her eyes cracked it, sir; her eyes did it.

Alseldo. She dropped the dish?

Second Workman. That's it, that's it, and cried, and flurried, and looked sad, and said dead, crushed, mashed, killed in a very mixed order, and then the boy, Hylas, came with flowers, came as though he had been sent for, and the two went off together, and that's all, and were I my aunt, I could not tell more.

Alseldo. Now what is this? Here are rags, cast-off clothes; some one has been housing here.

Captain. What's this? now, by're Nep, the sea has split, or I have no head on my neck.

Alseldo. What is the matter?

Captain. The sea has split, sir; there's nothing truer than that the sea has split; a wind-storm can crack itself like a pop-gun, sir, and blow itself into a calm, and a sea can rage and foam till it splits, and makes dry land of itself.

Alseldo. I must beg you, sir, to explain yourself; to say that a sea can split is to say that a hieroglyph can talk good English; and to say that a split sea can have anything to do with this cave is to say that a mummy can instruct a good housewife to make butter. I beg you, sir, be clear.

Captain. O, sir, the sea is split, or this island is a plank, or these clothes are duck feathers, or my eyes are in somebody else's head, or the air here has come from ghosts' lungs, or the world is upside down, or I am mixed, mixed, mixed.

Alseldo. The last expression of yours, sir, very evidently contains a truth, and it would require eyes accustomed to cuneiform inscriptions to see any light-streaks in your mixture; it's perfectly homogeneous, sir.

Captain. These clothes, I've seen them before.

Alseldo. The dence you have, where?

Captain. On the sea, in a storm, on a man we dropped out to drown, but didn't hang any stones on his neck; that was a great mistake; stones are the best drowners, next to lead; are there any ghosts on this island? do ghosts go naked, do they wear rags?

Alseldo. I understand, sir, you cast a man overboard the night of the storm, and these clothes were on him; from this you surmise that he has come ashore?

Captain. That's it, that's it itself.

Alseldo. If you stand still a moment, I will give you a sum of conclusion: this man, whom you cast overboard, has floated ashore without any split sea, come to this cave, found my daughter, got her to pity him, and give him clothes; then pity became still softer, and she brought this dish, and sent this boy for flowers; then she comes contrary to my command, finds him gone and goes to hunt him. There, man, not a ghost about it; ghosts are in the eyes, the nose, the ears, on the tongue, and in the head. Finish this work as I ordered you. Come, sir, Captain, we will find this daughter of mine, and this reasoned-out castaway, and if he has softened my daughter's heart, and crept into love with her, as I strongly fear, you may take your castaway, and feel yourself in no respect bound or obliged to take my daughter.

Captain. The love will not matter: love's a squall; a sailor likes a steadier wind, and a lastier one; find her out to-night, and give her to me; to-morrow we are off, and if she were in love with every man on the island, when we come back she'll be my worshipper.

Alseldo. It shall be done; come, we will find them.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I. *The Cave of NEPTUNE.* NEPTUNE *alone.*

Neptune. What is a play? a spider thread of thought,
Seen floating on a sunny Summer day;
One end is fastened and the rest is followed:
The finger glides along across a clod
Of obstacles, now through the happy air,
Now lost in stubble maze of difficulty,
Till at last it ends, and done's the play;
A little fortune, and a deal of woe,
Some chance, some purpose, and some lie and truth;
Some landscapes from the heart, some from the world,
With this the prime condition: from the first
It is a growth, and each new-added part
Is fixed, and holds and shapes and finishes the whole;
Therein it gains its meaning; as the world
'Tis fixed as firm as fate, with no retreat,
And is the soul's exemplar and its copy.
What, Nep, turned philosoph? Enough, enough!
And yet this course of things is wonderful;
As though the world were crazed; now, lovers, prig
No more; turn out your tailors, hoot your barbers,
Break your looking-glasses, and wear rags;
Go off to sea, be tossed, and scorched, and froze,
Eat up by cannibals, or anything
To fill your heads with tales; the world's a teeter,
And the maids are dizzied, and have lost their senses;
Or else the fault's my island. Hey, how is it?
How goes it? Come, Ariel, Galiel, Thaliel, come.

Enter ARIEL, GALIEL, and THALIEL.

Ariel and Galiel. [In concert.] O, Neptune, we beseech thee, cease,

Look, look, we clasp our hands in peace;

United in this prayer to thee,

To set two love-tied lovers free.

Neptune. What, free two souls from greatest bliss?

Sure, spirits, you have spoke amiss;

And more, how should I know their love?

I do not o'er the island rove;

Here do I sit, and wait for you

To tell me all, and tell it true.

Ariel. I know the saddest tale to tell.

Galiel. But mine is wofuller than thine.

Ariel. I tell of Acne.

Galiel.

Of Aliso, I.

Ariel. She weeps sad tears.

Galiel.

His thirsting cheeks are dry.

Ariel. She wanders here and there;

Galiel.

He sits alone.

Ariel. And wakes the air with sigh.

Galiel.

And he with moan.

Neptune. O, spirits, leave this road of corduroy,
And speak, each singly, and without annoy;

I fear your peace will be June frost, short lived,

You start your spats as though both manned and wived.

Tell me, Ariel, of the weeping maid,

Whence did she come, and whither has she strayed?

Ariel. O, father Neptune, sure no maiden's heart

Was ever pierced with painfuller love-dart:

She hid her lover, but to find him gone,

Or stony ruin lying him upon;

O, painful which her lover free and fled,
Or buried e'er he was assured dead!

Neptune. Bah, bah! true love will ever have it so;
This is scarce inkling of a true-love woe.
But tell me where my wandering nymph has gone.

Ariel. O, end this play with her. O, woe is love!
O, pity her sad heart. O bring her lover.
My heart was very air, but now 'tis lead,
With pity for this love-distracted maid:
I watched her till you called; now here, now there,
She roams around to search this sea-split island;
Now sees a shadow and calls out, "'tis he,"
And hastes to find cold airy emptiness;
Again she sits, and sobs he's dead, he's dead;
Then comes the boy, the pretty young boy, Hylas,
That came with her, and thought to hunt for flowers,
And kisses her and says, "come, Acne, come."
I know another place that's low and shaded,
There are sad flowers, if any where, come, come."
He cannot understand why she should weep;
Then quick she rises and runs on before,
Till breathless the poor boy cries, "Acne, wait."
Thus like a fawning spaniel does he follow,
Now runs before, now this side and now that,
Bewildered by the quickness of her fancy's change.

Galiel. Aliso sits alone.

Neptune. Peace, peace; go on.

Ariel. The boy sees only joy where she sees pain,
And brings her flowers to throw them down again;
Now laughs and thinks, "another place I know;"
Then goes, and comes again, again to go
With quivering lip, and hide his face, and cry;
And once I stood when he came running by,

And plucked a columbine with dew-wet ears;
 He called them diamonds, and she called them tears;
 And then the boy laughed out, "Why, Acne, dear,
 How funny that an ear should have a tear!"
 Then Acne laughed and wept, and wept and laughed,
 And kissed the boy,—

Gaiel. And all the time Aliso,—

Neptune. Hush, hush, your lover's tale must longer wait,
 Then shall you peacefully his woes relate.

Ariel. O, Neptune, spare her from a farther woe.

Neptune. My pretty Ariel, go bring her here;
 Once more I grant the lovers happy meeting;
 Go, find some means and lead her to this cave,
 And bring the boy while I hear Gaiel's woe.

Ariel. Quick I'll find where they have strayed,
 And thy command shall be obeyed. [*Exit.*

Neptune. Now one's disposed of; Gaiel, of the other
 I would hear; where is Aliso? alone
 I heard you say, and moaning sighs of love.

Gaiel. I would the saucy Ariel had stayed,
 I would his woe with greater woe have paid:
 Aliso has no boy to gather flowers,
 But in the darkest wood bemoans his hours,
 And fears to move, lest his detection bring
 Harm to the maid.

Neptune. Why, this is as I'd have it.

Gaiel. There does he sit, and weigh what he shall do,
 With hungry stomach and a hungrier heart,
 And fills the woods with sighs, and vows to starve,
 And hide in darkness of the coming night,
 Until that ship shall leave the island free.

Neptune. Now will I take a part; they that stand by
 Where others work are oft the tired:

I'll seek Aliso and will bring him here.

Gaiel. He starts at every sound.

Neptune.

I'll creep upon him

Ere he is aware, in dwarfish shape,—

Enough! I'll bring him here, and love shall reign.

Meanwhile the workmen seek to find their ghost;

Go lead them here.

Gaiel. O, Neptune, spare, O, spare.

Neptune. Go, bring them here; but mind, not till with
vows,

And all the fragile chains that consecrated

Are to love, these lovers have made fast

And bound themselves, chains easy broke as forged,

But in the process many a spark does fly,

That glows, and pleases many a passing eye.

Now Gaiel, go; we all shall busy be,

And Thaliel, I'll find employ for thee.

[*Exit Gaiel.*]

What would'st thou do, my Thaliel?

Thaliel.

Alone

About the rocky shore I'd roam

And dress my hair with pearls of foam,—

Neptune. Not so, no idling here; no vagabonds,

To stroll the shores and dally with the waves.

Thou shalt aloft; thy speed is like the light,

That rolls upon the smoothed path of night;

Go, tell the gods the end comes on apace;

Before the folding doors of morning's stall,

Let out old Phœbu's steeds, my isle shall fall.

Bid them be present at the closing scene;

All shall be ended as begun I ween.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II. *Another place on the Island.*

Enter ALSELDO, CAPTAIN, FIRST and SECOND MATE.

Captain. Strange, most strange!

Alseldo. Nothing strange about it; you were near the shore when you put him overboard.

Captain. That was the devil's storm: old Nick himself had set it on, and on the topmasts, rails, and yards, wherever a corner stuck out loose, his minions sat, and looked at us, and crackled, laughed, and chuckled; I tell you it was the devil's own storm.

Alseldo. Tut, man, the storm is in your head: Our grapes are strong; there are waves of wine in your mind; what say you, sir, can you speak my wine high?

First Mate. Its quality and its quantity run races with each other, and the wine itself grows red, and blushes, and sparkles, while it looks on.

Alseldo. Good, you hear, sir? Why, man, soon we'll prove to you there was no storm.

Captain. Do you remember the clothes we put on him?

Second Mate. Well, very well!

Captain. They've come ashore.

Second Mate. They were not hard to strip off him; no wonder they floated ashore; clothes are feathers, fins, wool, hair, cotton, all light, all floaty.

Alseldo. Come, man! why this is the veriest of cowardice. Let us go down to the shore, there is another place that used to have a spring in it. There I suspect my daughter is gone. Come, let us find her.

Galiel. [*Sings, invisible.*] Ere the heavens with morning glow,

Will the sea this isle o'erflow.

Captain. Hark, hark!

Galiel. Not a spot will land or shore,
Show above the sea waves hoar.

Captain. Do you hear it?

Galiel. Vulcan's fire and heaven's thunder,
Then will spread your eyes in wonder.

Captain. I say, do you hear it, man?

Alseldo. I hear nothing; why, man, you're a ghost, a battery; your hair is bristles, your eye-balls, why, man, they're wall-eyed, they've gone to looking the wrong way; they've turned in there, where this sound is, that we don't hear. Come, let us get under the cover of the house, till you can get your hair down, and your eyes out. Come, come!

[*Exeunt.*]

Enter GALIEL.

Galiel. With songs and air-sounds will I fright him,
Will I bewitch, betroll, benight him;
Had I care of all earth's lovers,
They should chirrup like Spring plovers.

[*Exit.*]

SCENE III. *A Wood.*

Enter NEPTUNE as Dwarf. ALISO, seated.

Aliso. O, what is difficulty where love is?
If I were wedged fast in thy cloven trunk,
O elm, and that dear maid should come to me,
I'd stop my whine and soon forget my pain.
O, I am happy; tut, hunger, I am deaf,
I hear you not; I'll feed you on mushrooms,
Or let you snarl; O, now I see the world
Was made to hold this maid, and I to roam
Around until I found her; but should they find me;—
Hark, hark!

Neptune. Acne, Acne! this name will hold him.

Aliso. Most wonderful! what, have I thought so loud,
The woods reëcho my unspoken thought?
I have not said her name, and yet I hear it.
Now this is sensible: the trees are lovers
When a lover's near them; all nature knows
The secrets of the heart, and keeps them secret
From all other hearts; is confidante
To every one, but ne'er betrays their tales;
Then if I hear her name from every leaf,
I'll say it is but nature's sympathy,

Neptune. Acne! Acne!

Aliso. Dear wood you've learned my song.

Neptune. Acne! Acne!

Aliso. Now if some gnarled root,
For that the leaves have voices and roots none,
Should swell with envy, and take on some shape,
Some form fantastic, gifted with tongue speech,
I would but think it due and rightly seized;
For why should one part thus be overpowered?
The world shall all be voice when I am king,
And every part alike shall speak that name.

Neptune. [*Approaching*]. The maiden, Acne, comes.

Aliso. This goes beyond

The power of nature; she is no reasoner.
Now have I read old tales, that in the woods
Are giants, dwarfs, all kinds of elves and witches,
Who never show themselves but when they feel
The hot breath of a lover's sigh; I'll sigh,
Though these are tales, mere films, not worth a thought;
But when our fancy is set on by love
Love makes us credent of our fancy's forms.

I would believe, [*Neptune lays his hand upon Aliso's shoulder*]
the very heaviness

My shoulders make, was pressure of some elf,
Some alpen drücken, as when maids asleep
Lie still and dream of love; then sigh and weep
And gape, and see their lovers, but to wake
And find them gone. My thoughts are realized.
Dear Dwarf, were you a vision thinner
Than the bloodless sea medusa, that is the very
Sea soap bubble, I beseech you stay.
Tell me did you say Acne? did I hear your voice?
Where is the maid, or are you voiceless?

Neptune. I've come to lead you to her.

Aliso.

Beautiful!

Thou art the fairest dwarf,—wouldst thou not think
It merest flattery, thy shaggy beard
I'd call a silver-colored waterfall;
Thy humpy back I'd call the rich loamed mountain;
Thy forehead should the mountain's marble brow
Impersonate; thy eyes be bubbling fountains;
And thy voice, that tells me of my love,
Should be the tepid breezes of the South
Upon the melting snow. Where is my love?

Neptune. Come with me quietly; be not afraid.

Aliso. Where have I seen you? Where have I heard that
voice?

Neptune. Come, come! I am your dream, your lifeless
vision.

Aliso. By heaven, you shall tell me who you are;
I were content you were a bloodless vision,
But that your voice has stirred my head alive
With whirling memories; who are you, who?

Neptune. Underneath the airy sky,

Next to Jove in power am I;
When he laughs I lie and listen
While the sunbeams on me glisten;
When he frowns I seek the shore,
And range among the caves, and roar;
An hour ago I found a maid,
Upon the shore where she had strayed:
Bound in love-knots was her hair,
If you come, I lead you there.

Aliso. I grow no wiser from your rhymed speech.
I will not follow you, begone, begone!
I'll try if you're a vision: where's a club?
Visions are such shapes accommodating,
That a thrust a cut, a slash, no more
Disturbs them than a breath, the air.—No, hold!
The memory was good. I know not where,
Or when, or how I've seen you; but I'll go;
For there are overtones of memory
That linger when the baser sounds are dead;
These bid me trust you; lead on, I follow you.

[*Exeunt. Aliso rapt.*]

SCENE IV. *By the Cave of Neptune.*

Enter ARIEL.

Ariel. They come, I found them easy lure;
Where love encamps, there capture's sure:
Now as a fluttering mother bird,
Who leads the wanton from her ward,
Now chirping some cicada tune,
As restful as a Summer noon,
Did I lead and lure the boy,
And Acne followed,—ship ahoy!

Here they come; now, now, I'll sing them
One more bird song here to bring them:

O'er the tree tops, treet, tre, tree!

Fly I, fly I, fly I;

Not a boy can bother me,

Treet, tre, tree! treet, tre, tree!

Heigh yei! heigh yei! heigh yei! [*Exit.*

Enter HYLAS, *running*

Hylas. Where is the bird? come, Acne, here, 'twas here;
I know it by its song; it is John Wren,
The man who is a live and feathered thumb;
Come, Acne, come: Why here's the Old Man's Cave!

Enter ACNE.

Acne. Come, Hylas, quick away.

Hylas. No here's the cave;
I call't the Old Man's Cave.

Acne. Come, come away.

Hylas. Why, you're afraid: you shiver; I want to tell you

Acne. No, come away. Come where the woods are close
And there's no sea, no spring;—no, go and see
What's in the cave, then come. [*Exit Hylas.*

May be he is within; to-morrow, no!

O, dreadful thought! this cave, O yes, I know,

I had almost forgotten it; 'twas here,—

Yes here I lived; the storm, the nymph, the spring,—

Hylas. O, Hylas!

Enter HYLAS.

Come, what's in the cave?

Hylas. There's nothing there.

Acne. Come on, come quick.

Hylas. I wish that I could tell you
What I saw here once, and why I call't
The Old Man's Cave: there was a spring here once.

Acne. Come, boy, come on.

Hylas. But now it's all gone dry.

Acne. Well, tell it if you will

Hylas. There was a spring here,
And I used to come and play about it;
One day I came, and just here sat a man,
A little, old, dried man, with long, gray beard,
And humpy back, and shiny eyes, and hair
That hung down on his forehead, white as snow;
A crooked, funny man; I went up to him,
And then he limped away, and when I went
Inside, the spring was gone, and crumpled clay
Was there, and nothing more. Why, *Acne*, *Acne*,
What is it? you like to hear it?

Acne. Come, let's go in
And sit awhile

Enter SECOND WORKMAN.

and you may tell me more;

Come, come.

[*Exeunt Acne and Hylas.*

Second Workman. Here they've stopped, and gone in; here
come.

Enter FIRST WORKMAN.

See there they stopped awhile,

And then went in.

First Workman. What's to be done? We're not sent to
find them, and yet I know they're wanted.

Second Workman. Do you know how to catch green moths? tie the female in the window and put a lamp by her; in the morning you'll have a whole room full of he's.

First Workman. Do you think he'll come here?

Second Workman. Think it! what did you say about thought? Try it, man. Go you to the rest, and tell them of our find, and I'll lie here till you come; and what comes out I'll follow, and what goes in I'll know is there.

First Workman. Good, I'm gone.

Second Workman. Of course he'll come here; I'll lie down and hide and wait for him.

Enter NEPTUNE and ALISO.

What so soon! now as though expressed: two heads hide, another leaves, and two more are ready to take their places; it's just as well to hide my own then: now here, head, duck it; yet I wish the earth had a crack here, that I could hear and look through. [Exit.

Neptune. 'Twas here I saw her, and I much suspect
This place now hears her sighs; but hark you, man,
Write short your love, on briefs; or if you speak it,
Put't into vows so strong that one's enough;
I would not speak to you in mystery,—
Enough! I know your tale; the men will follow,
And will soon be here; you must be gone;
And more, now mark my words, before the dawn.
This island must have nothing but your tracks;
The why remain concealed in my mind.
Now I am minded to aid your escape;
Then in; here will I stand, and guard the door,
And when I call, break off and come away,
Nor danger life by lingering love play.

Away, begone, and my injunctions mind,
 No other friend so firm as mine you'll find. [Exit Aliso.
 Thus will I gain his trust, but call too late,
 And when he's captured he will blame his fate.
 The fire of love does never warmer glow
 Than when reflected from some cooling snow.
 This is my purpose, that I fan love on,
 To blow it out again before the dawn:
 The isle shall fall, Aliso shall go free;
 The nymph again be as she used to be;
 This love will send no bubble to the air,
 To show that ever sighful love was there. [Exit.

SCENE V. *In the House of Alseldo.*

ALSELDO, CAPTAIN and MATES. Enter FIRST WORKMAN.

First Workman. Your daughter, sir,—

Alseldo. Is still on the island, I surmise.

First Workman. I have just seen her,—

Alseldo. And,—

First Workman. And the boy, Hylas.

Alseldo. And,—

First Workman. And, and, and, and I saw no one else.

Alseldo. If you have anything to say, tell it in a bunch, man: you saw my daughter and the boy, Hylas; you need not describe them, nor make a history about them; where did you see them, and when, and what doing?

First Workman. We saw them come where the land runs down to a point in the sea; there they stopped, and went into a hollow cavern, where the spring used to be, and we suspect,—

Alseldo. Never mind what you suspect; enough! she is there; most likely your castaway is there with her; come, let us find them.

Captain. Now this is most heartless, most ingrateful: she's sailed off from her father's harbor, where she's anchored in the lee of the winds, year in, year out; this is heartless, perfectly heartless, sir. [*Exeunt*

SCENE VI. *The Cave of Neptune.*ALISO, ACNE, and HYLAS. *Enter* NEPTUNE.

Neptune. Come quick, away! [*Exit.*

Acne. What, must you leave so soon?

O, little minute we have been together!
But longer than all time, all other time!
To-morrow you will leave, and I, and I,—
O, were this night forever! I'll say farewell,
Dear love, I'll say farewell; I'll say't again,
And over and over; sure this long, long night's
Not yet begun; I'll say farewell till morning.

Aliso. I would not leave; O, I would stay till morning.
'Tis light, 'tis day from an unspotted sun;
And you my sun, my queen; O, say but stay
And all my will will grow into a rock;
I will remain by thee, and we'll repeat
Our new-learned vows, until all other lessons
Lose their conning and then fade away.

Acne. Long, long I searched for you, and thought you dead,
And prayed you might escape, and now, and now,
I'd have thee in a prison, there could I come
And be thy only light.

Aliso. Dear love, this leave
Is but to find a longer, surer stay:
Escape for me, that is not by thy side,
Is plunging in a snare; but I will find
Some bark to carry us, and when the sun

Shines on the sea again, we'll steer our boat
Together o'er the waves. O, I am hope.

Acne And I am full of fear: this is the last,—
The last time I shall see you; O stay a little:
Stay until 'tis dark, or till the moon
Comes up, or till the stars shine out, or till
Some planet not yet risen shall rise, and then
I'll wish it were the lost among the Pleiads,
For then thou'dst never go.

Aliso, Here will I stay
Until thou bid me go; nor will I think
Again of leaving thee. I'll sit and think
How high I prize thee; but I will not tell it:
I will think on forever, an endless task.
What is the boy's name, Hylas? Hylas, dear boy,
You are not jealous, come: she is my queen,
And she is yours.
Go, Hylas, to the door and tell the man
That sits there, that he need not call again;
If all the robbers come I will not go. [*Exit Hylas.*]

Acne. No, no; this is my foolish heart,
That has no eyes to look into the future.
I must not keep you.

Neptune. [*Entering*]. Away, begone; they come. [*Exit.*]

Aliso Dear love, I will not move: here will I sit until,—

Acne. O, haste, begone; O cruel words,
That I must speak! they freeze my lips; go, go.

Enter ALSELDO, CAPTAIN and WORKMEN.

But say once more this is no dream,
That when the day has frightened, leaves a sore
Inflamed in memory. O, words are air,
And lighter than a mist; but speak once more

Those words, those vows of love, they are not air,
 They are my rain, my soothing Summer shower;
 Say, when the night is gone, wilt thou still love,
 Or like the inconstant dew, rise with the sun
 To couch the coming night with other flowers?

Aliso. It is a little word that lovers say,
 "I will be true till death," but there's no greater;
 Then, death, come, groaning death, and thou wilt find
 My love-knot hard to undo; I vow till death
 I will be true.

Captain. The vow will not be long.

Acne. O, heaven! quick, quick!

Aliso. Too late!

Acne. O, I have killed him.

O, heart! O, tongue! O, foolish, prattling tongue.
 That kept you here!

Aliso. One word: fear not, fear not,
 I'll find a way.

'Tis best to go without resisting them.

Alseldo. Lead off; when morning comes
 Two difficulties will be easy solved [Exeunt.

Enter NEPTUNE.

Neptune. At first my thought was to be taken, too,
 To increase his trust in me; but when I heard
 The maid cry out and say, "O, I have killed him,"
 This seemed the better way, to escape unseen;
 For now't grows serious; how shall I free
 These lovers, and destroy their love?
 Some plan must be devised, and that in haste,
 Or soon all cunning plan will be but waste. [Exit.

ACT IV.

SCENE I. *By the NYMPH'S Grotto. Evening.*

Enter ARIEL, GALIEL, and THALIEL.

Galiel. Ah me! I would that spirits could shed tears.

Thaliel. Thy would is one-half mine.

Ariel. And one-half mine.

Galiel. A three-halved would! but I in truth am sad.

Thaliel. And I.

Ariel. And I.

Galiel. Then shall we dance for grief?

Thaliel. I'd rather make pretence of pouring tears.

Ariel. Glass-hearted Galiel!

Galiel. I have a thought.

Thaliel. Let't drop; let't drop.

Galiel. Let's tell a tale of woe.

Thaliel. Begin, begin.

Galiel. I'll weave it of the fear,
That's cocooned round my heart: upon the shore
The pretty, loveless maid will roam no more.—
De dee! I cannot tell't, my throat is full;
Try't, Ariel.

Ariel. I'm not so chicken-hearted.
I'll spin my tale,—for I begin as you,—
From sorrow—milk-week-down, and dye it red,
For on the shore I see a hero dead.—

Da daa! what's more to say? tell thine, tell thine,

Thaliel. I'll tell it if I can, but where begin?

I cannot do as you, both weave and spin,
And yet I know the saddest tale to tell,
About a man, who thought to end all well

And failed. Alas! my tale is even done,
And I had scarcely thought it was begun.

Galiel. A woful out!

Ariel. And yet methinks 'twas sad.

Thaliel. Sist! father Neptune comes, begone, begone;
A grimful countenance his face has on. [Exeunt.

Enter NEPTUNE.

Neptune. What shall I do? how cut this difficulty?
But first I'll know just how the knot is tied;
My Ariel,

Enter ARIEL.

draw on thy winged shoes,
Which outfly thought, and bring me what I'd know:
What do they with Aliso? what with the maid?
What are the doings on the isle to-night?
This answer me. Now go. [Exit ARIEL.

How can I wait
For even his return? my haste is growing.
Now would I save these two; enough's enough.
The nymph has loved;—this was at first my purpose.
I would not lose her to be carried off
And married to this captain; she has suffered
Full plenty of love-pain; and this Aliso
Has shown himself well worthy of his rescue.
As for the rest, that haunt this witch'd-up island,
They touch me little, and if all go down,
My tears will make the brine no heavier.
The nymph must now return; this is the end
That hangs out loose; by this I will untie it;
This power I gave her, but I have no way

To make her use it; should it be that love
Has so took hold of her, that she refuses
When I bid her come,—what shall I do?
Then am I forced in spite of all her pains,
To make them sharper till at last she yield:
I'll drive her, if it must be to the peak
Of highest difficulty, till she leap
Upon this only shelf of rescue; then
The rest is easy done. Meanwhile the play
Has lost its triviality: I have
Almost forgotten Puck, and e'en the elves.
The little graceful trippers of the meads
Are quite superfluous; I'll let them lie
Where I have furnished them a picnic couch.
Where is this Ariel? why, sure he's slower,—

Enter ARIEL.

How now, clod hopper, with your thick-soled brogans,
I thought I bade you haste.

Ariel. On winged winds about the isle,—

Neptune. Stop, not another word;
Where are your senses? can you not perceive
That seriousness has flown and settled here?
Tell clearly and distinctly what you tell.

Ariel. The rich Alseldo does prepare a feast,
To be the green leaves to a wedding rose.

Neptune. Now, Ariel, this is intolerable.
Tell me in straight, planed words, where is Aliso?

Ariel. He lies fast bound.

Neptune. Where is the nymph?

Ariel. They flatter her, and soothe and say soft words,
That seem to her like thorns wrapped up in wool.

Neptune. Have you no more to tell?

Ariel.

A messenger

Has gone to fetch the priest.

Neptune.

What, now at last!

This lets me out; you've stumbled on a nugget;

That's it; where is the priest?

Ariel.

Deep in the wood;

A holy man,—

Neptune Show me the way; I'll go

And rob him of his visage; ha, ha! a priest!

Ariel. I am a priest, away.

Go to the maid; remind her of her spring;

Keep fresh in her the memory of the words,

"I would return;" they are her refuge, go. [*Exit Ariel.*

I'll to the priest; but hold; come come, come come;

Enter GALIEL and THALIEL.

Hush, not a word. Fill up your heads with songs;

Practice your nimble throats, till not a sound

Chromatic as a needle point, but you

Can find and sing it; watch me; stand about,

Where you may see into unspoken thought,

For I shall need you; away.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *In the House of ALSeldo. Night.*

ALSeldo, CAPTAIN, MATES and SERVANTS.

Alseldo. That we thus turn the night into the day,

Replace the darkness with our artificial suns,

And here begin a feast, when properly

Our natures should be dead, or feigning death,

And in this seeming cheat, filling their pockets

With new-stolen nourishment, your haste

To leave our island must excuse. I trust,
 Your superstitious fancies driven out,
 Your mind will readily embrace this hour,
 Though even the very day dividing line,
 To make the feast's beginning; nature made
 This latter half of darkness down hill night,
 Or up hill of the day; then let us ride
 With festive trot the easy downgrade slope,
 And leave to snoring swains the rising half.

Captain. Your sailor trips it with the lightest toe:
 Now heel, now pad, now bend, now crook the knee;
 The deck's his dancing master; grant me leave
 To call the ship's crew here, I wager you,
 Your walls will grow sick with the stomach's dizziness.

Alseldo. It is a good suggestion; thus we'll join
 The sea and shore in dance of jollity.
 Go, rouse the workmen from their lazy beds,
 Whisper a tune of midnight dance into their heads,
 And bring them hither. [Exit Servants.

Fetch on supply of wine;

Prepare the tables; bring the gypsy crew,
 That house it in the neighboring narrow lane;
 Their mirth is catching as a chicken pox,
 And when they dance we must break out with it.
 One have I sent to fetch the knot-tying priest.
 Go, bid my daughter haste; the time draws on,
 And we have much to do before the morning.
 An hour of roaring mirth will fright away
 More hankerings of love than any lion
 Meek-hearted sheep. But gild a wedding well
 And fill't with mirth, and other loves are gone. [Exeunt.

SCENE III. *Another Room in the House of Alseldo.*ACNE. *Enter a SERVANT.**Servant.* Your father calls; make ready for the wedding.[*Exit.*]

Acne. O, stay a moment; tell me, must I go?
Is there no help? O, he has gone and left me
Alone and in despair; what can I do?
I must prepare myself,—for what, O what?
He said, “I’ll find a way;” that gives me hope;
What way? what path is open through this maze
Of thorny difficulty? Would that death?
No, no, I will not wish for death;—yet death’s
A better bridegroom than an unsought one;
O, gloomy death! here, here, I have a thought:
I’ll dress myself for death, and for my love:
I’ll wear a cloak of black, and think of graves;
But for my hope,—let’s see;—I will prepare
A myrtle wreath, and wear a veil of white
Beneath my cloak, and thus be outward symbolled
As my heart is portioned between hope and fear.

[*Busies herself with the veil.*]*Enter ARIEL.**Ariel.* How shall I speak to her? how give my message?*Acne.* Who are you, and where from? what do you here?*Ariel.* I am the spirit, Ariel, of the air:

When I would weep I comb the willow’s hair,
And bend its locks, as o’er a face asleep,
While men, who look, see but the willow weep;
At eve I climb upon the gloomy pine,
And no one knows its moaning sounds are mine;
Or hid among the cypress boughs I lie,

Where all its needles turn my breath to sigh;
I shake the cottonwood, and blanch its leaves
And ignorant mortals say the sad tree grieves;
I roll the showers from the sycamore,
Then rub its leaves, and dry them as before;
Dear maid, I have a tender heart believe;
I come to bring your sadness good reprieve.

Acne. Gentle spirit, sure your words are fine;
Would, would your heart could feel the pain of mine!
Then tears, or sighs, or moans, or tangled hair,
Would be no solace for your heart-worn care.
If you that round me in the soft air hover
Have pity for me, bear me to my lover.

Ariel. There is no solace for a love-sick heart,
That lives and suffers from its love apart;
And if its love must die, O maid! O maid!
On what in heaven then is solace stayed?

Acne. Speak, spirit, I must conjure thee,
In words more meaning plain to me.
A sad foreboding in thy words I hear,
And your reprieve of fear proclaims new fear

Ariel. I peep through cracks of time, and there I've seen,
What will thy heart still sharper pain I ween;
Though I through airy paths my footsteps swerve,
I now the water king, Neptune, serve;
You start, I see my words your bosom burn,—
Nymph, nymph, your freedom is, "I would return;"
These are the charm; keep these before your mind,
And soon a pretty, painless spring you'll find.
My charge is done; I go, but this perforce
Must lead thee from the snares about thy course. [*Exit.*

Acne. O, stay, O, stay. Now even air deceives me,
And sends its promises, then pains and leaves me.

Was this your comfort, to recall my cave?
No, no! a thought far better is my grave.

Enter ALSELDO.

Alseldo. [*Perceiving the veil.*] Why, this is well; this shows
a willing heart;

I will forget your disobedience.

So, pretty, trig yourself and come; the dance

Will soon begin. Why, this is quick obeyed;

Put love into a heart, and I declare

It makes no difference what love is there.

Why, soon I'll bless the chance that brought the man.

Whose love makes you thus heedful of my plan.

Acne. O, spare me, spare, O, spare; the feast is spoiled,
The dancers lame, the sweetest meats are tainted.

What can I plead that I, myself, may stow

My heart, my gift, where I would have it go?

Love is a little thing, as life is little;

I have not known it long, but life and love

Have grown together, have their sustenance

From out the same root, and if torn apart,

The tree must die, and I'm the tree, O spare.

Alseldo. What, so? still stubborn? Out! I'll hear no more:

No whine, no sickly dout, as some spoiled child,

That blubbers at the curing medicine

By heaven and earth, my wrath will soon arise;

You runaway! you young deceiving witch!

I'll break you in, and tame you; get you ready

When I come again to go with me.

[*Exit.*

Acne. O heaven! what, O what! I'll think it through

The twentieth time to find something to do.

I'll wipe my tears and think with clearer eyes,

Nor sigh for trouble is made worse by sighs:
I cannot marry him, O death! O death!
Nor can I die for love is my life's breath;
I cannot breathe and blow my breathings out,—
O, choking knot, O rope, thy strings are stout.
I thought to hide this knife here in my breast,
And when the worst came, prick me to my rest;
But this I cannot do, I may not die,
And love alone can give the reason why;
I'll throw it down; no, no, I'll hide it here;
My burial bed shall be my bridal bier;
Thus will I mix the joy and pain of life,
I will not be a forced and loveless wife.
O! O! I see I cannot reason it,
For reason bounds, and sighs lie where it hit;
But this is best, this way I will pursue,
To have one more way that I may not through:
I'll keep the knife, and hope and reason on,
And fear and sigh until the morning dawn,
Nor think once of the wood the spirit gave,
For rather will I think upon my grave. [Exit.

SCENE IV. A Wood.

Enter NEPTUNE and GALIEL.

Galiel. This is the place. Yon shagbarked hollow tree
Is made his cell; within he tells his beads.—

Hark, hark! the messenger,

Neptune.

Now *Galiel*,

If thou hast any show of spirit trick,
Take on some form and lure this man away;
If he remains, my intents are eggshells mashed.
What, canst thou do't? say quick, before I send

To fetch a host of fays, his course to bend.

Galiel. I'll be the maid with fiery wisp,
Of crackling torch and gases crisp,
And lead him thus your way beyond,
And sink him in the boggy pond.

Neptune. Quick, quick! he comes. I'll hide within this
tree;

Hide there, until your lazy wits ferment,
And raise this little loaf of saving dough;
Be off and come transformed or e'er you go.

[*Exeunt. Neptune behind the tree.*]

Enter MESSENGER.

Messenger. Sure, it was here; what thing was that I saw?
The priest lives here, or I am blind, or lame,
Or led by some crook-legged Saint Vitus' dance
The wrong way; I will call: ho, ho!

Enter GALIEL with a torch.

What's this?

Who are you, pray? tell me what is your trade?
This is strange place to find an honest maid.

Galiel. Oh, dearest nightman, I have gone astray;
Come, guard me to my home, I'll light the way.

Messenger. Who are you, tell me, I would know your name;
I fear you lead me some deceptive game.

Galiel. Come, go with me, I'll tell you on the way.

Messenger. No, I must find the priest, I fear you play.

Galiel. Stay, stay a moment here, and I will tell
My name, my duties, and the where I dwell:
Fair Galiel am I of the mellow ground;
My couch is made where gurgling waters sound,

And where no cricket chirps about my head,
There on the moss-stuffed slats I lay my bed;
And when at night a weary man I find,
I lead him there, and there his cares unbind,
And take from off his back, and on the ground
He rests, soothed by the sweetest bubble sound.
Come follow me; when you have learned the way,
You may return and hunt for priests till day. [Exeunt.]

Enter NEPTUNE as PRIEST.

Neptune. I found it easy work to get his gown,
But his hypocrisy was harder won;
This stole upon my back is easy born;
This hood befits me as though always worn;
Thus do these little shows the power lend,
Their easy form about each corner bend.
My head is suitable for dwarf or priest,
And needs no changing for the coming feast;
Strange, how the simple shifting of a gown
In moral scale will move us up or down!
She will not know me hid beneath this cloak,
And thus will I some airy powers invoke,
To grace her wedding and her heart to burn
Until she refuge in, "I would return."
But first I seek Aliso in the gloom,
To tell him of his rescue from his doom. [Exit.]

SCENE V. *Same as Scene II.*

ALSELDO, CAPTAIN, SERVANTS and MATES.

Alseldo. Bring in the bride; [Exit SERVANT.] her little
stubbornness
Shall soon be broke. Go, meet her at the door;

The dearest welcome to expectant bride,
Is when she find a bridegroom at her side.

Enter ACNE, in black.

Captain. Good evening, wife, my chuck.

Acne. If you were black,

You might become my husband.

Captain. I'm black enough.

Acne. I'm promised to a blacker.

Captain. You talk in riddles; come, my ship's your kitchen,
The sea is field and garden, the sailors cooks,
Of whom I'm chief; there shall you make a mess,
To serve upon a china dish; come, come.

Acne. My husband lives on land and sea.

Captain.

And I

Am now on land, and soon will be on sea.

Acne. He lives upon the bottom of the sea
And underneath the surface of the ground.

Captain. Strange puzzler!

Acne.

I'll undo the puzzle; death,
Black death, who lives with worms, with skulls, and slime,
And never shows above the land or sea,
But long enough to grasp his victims,
Shall become my husband, but not you.

Captain. Here, here I've lived so long upon a ship
I've learned to give commands, and be obeyed;
Sit there; I will begin no wordy strife,
But by your side I'll stay till you're my wife.

[*Seats Her and sits by Her.*

Alseldo. Bring in the workmen. Let the dance begin.

Enter some WORKMEN.

You men who stand godfathers to our trees,
And name th' engrafted limbs, and educate
Them till their heads produce; and you, whose arms
Embrace the maiden sheaves, and gird their waists;
And you, that from the black womb of the soil,
Midwife the marble forth, and dry, and wrap it
Into human shape; forget your loves,
Your several duties, and be minded here,
To add with lively dance unto our cheer;
For you alone that busied are with earth,
Can know the good enjoyment of her mirth.

[The Workmen attempt to dance and fail.

What, thus! this is a camel dance:
You wade in sand; your lubber heads are heavy;
Here take your place, and drink to make them light;
You rather spoil than grace our feast to-night.

[The Workmen are seated.

Go, call the sailors; when the shore is dark
The sea is fittest for a gala bark.

Enter some SAILORS.

You sailors, whom the maid Terpsichore
Accompanies upon the roaring sea,
And teaches to forget th' engulfing brine,
By dance on deck in tenderest moonshine,
W' invite you here to join your lively dance,
And thus our willing spirits to entrance;
Give us light rolls and turns, and at the sight,
We dream we lie embraced of Amphitrite.

[The Sailors dance awkwardly.

Were this the only pleasure of the salt,
 I would prefer to sleep in some earth vault
 Than leave the land; here, find a suiting place
 And let the dancing wine your lack of dance replace.

[*The Sailors are seated.*]

One other preparation has been made;
 If this should fail some cunning has been played;
 Go, bring the gypsy and her singing girl,
 And while one times it let the other whirl.

Enter GYPSY WOMAN and GIRL.

Come you, that migrate in a wild goose chase,
 And ply your shaky trade from place to place,
 Who bear no rule, as other men of earth,
 Invent us what, to waken up our mirth.

[*The Girl looks sorrowfully at Acne.*]

Gypsy Woman. When the creased palm is cold,
 I am sure to get no gold;
 When the quick beneath the nail,
 Brazens, blushes, or grows pale,
 Then I know the heart is mild,
 To pity me and feed my child;
 When I pluck from out the crown
 Of king or wretch, of wise or clown,
 A barbed hair and rub it well,
 His future and his past I tell;
 Now nor hair nor palm I hold,
 Give me first a coin of gold.

Alseldo. This is a beggar song; a witch song; out!
 I'll hear no more of it; there's in the air
 Some foul malaria, that's jaundiced them.
 We'll hear the girl; witch, can your daughter sing?

Gypsy Woman. She can if she will, but we are free,
From cradle to grave, both he and she;
If her you would hear ask her, not me.

Alseldo. Come, girl, sing us a song, a tripping song.

Gypsy Girl. Barefoot about the broad way I wander,
Ho e ho e ho;

Now I pass hither and now pass yonder,
Ho e ho e ho;

Once from beneath my straw hat's brim,
Ho e ho e ho,

Saw I a youth, and I called to him,
Ho e ho e ho;

Over the way he came to me,
Ho e ho e ho,

The hedge thorns about I no more did see,
Ho e ho e ho;

Now he has gone and my feet are sore,
Ho e ho e ho,

Lady I pity thy sorrow the more,
Ho e ho e ho.

Alseldo. This is a wretched song, a funeral song.

Gypsy Woman. You asked her for her tripping tones,
And lively metres measure moans.

Acne. I think it was a very pleasing song;
I thank thee, gypsy girl.

Alseldo. It is your cloak,
Your gloomy cloak, that does it; it drips of dumps,
And all have grown wet from it; I'll have it off thee;
But first the feast and wine! I should have thought,
Before a feast no mirth was ever brought.

[Curtain falls on the preparation.

SCENE VI. *A darkened Room.* ALISO.

Aliso. Hark, who comes! now have I hoped in vain,
Or is this some beginning for the better?

Enter NEPTUNE as Priest.

Who are you?

Neptune. I come,—be not afraid.

Aliso. I know your voice; you are the dwarf; what means
This garb? before I saw you in the woods
I heard your voice; I am a prisoner
I think; suppose me one; then, have you power
And pity, help me out.

Neptune. I come to free you,
And send you from the island.

Aliso. Heaven be praised!

There was a certain,—

Neptune. Would you escape,

Forget her.

Aliso. You speak in mystery.

Neptune. Much would I tell you, hear me quietly:

You recognize my voice, but not my form,
And well, for one remains the same, the other
Has been changed; do you remember still
Th' enchanted island with the many charms,
The ship and robber boat, the capture, chase,
The storm, the sailor, that came up to you,
Gave you a garment when they cast you out,
And said, "take this, go quietly,
Be not afraid,"—you lost it in the sea,—
I say do you remember these, or has
This love expelled all other memory?
And in the sea,—what! man, do you not think

That more than wind or wave helped you ashore?
What one dropped out with not a single spar
Could ride such waves? is this before your mind?
I'd have it clear?

Aliso.

O, heaven!

What spell is this about to break, what dream
Of pain, and love and joy? O, could our dreams
Leave us their better part! speak, man, speak quick,
And I will stretch and gape and waken up,
And live to bless the night, and curse the sun,
The one for love, the other for its death;
What you have said I know too well, too well.

Neptune. Be calm; I have not told you all; thus much
Is not a dream: you sailed upon the sea,
From north to south; you fought with cannibals;
You saw the inflamed throat of the volcano;
You came to the delightful island; this
Is stiff reality; from there,—

Aliso. O, would it were reversed: the first all air,
The rest all solid substance! I am bound
By some enchantment, charmed by some sleek serpent,
Till I love the charm. O man! O ghost!
Who are you? where am I? what is this heavenly maid?
Are these chains gossamers?

Neptune.

From there,—the island,—

I must tell you first that there are powers
That rule above the heads of mortal men,
And one of these am I; for man to ask
Of these a reason for their acts is folly,
And to reproach them is a blasphemy;
Know then, I have created here this island;
It is a bubble that will soon be pricked.
For my own purpose I have brought you here,
Surrounded you with danger, and will save you.

Aliso. By heaven, your promises but anger me.
Is't thus you wriggle round the point, or is a maid,
A love, too light a portion of a dream
To be recounted?

Neptune. Of her I will not speak.

Aliso. Then leave me. Could I untwist these manacles,—

Neptune. O man, you are a weak and captured fly;
And were you free, a breath of mine would whirl you
Like a shriveled hair; and were you master
Over me, another hour would sink you
With this island in the sea; the maid
Would perish too,—

Aliso. O, I will listen to you;
Speak on, I will be quiet: tell me what's dream,
What's thought, what's lie, what's truth, tell on, tell on.

Neptune. Now mark me clearly; there is here one boat,
One little bark canoe, that like a ball sealed up,
Can float the waves; this boat shall bear you,
When an hour has passed, safe to your kingdom.

Aliso. Man, if you have ensnared me in your web,
Its parts should hold together; who are you?
What means this sombre cloak? the mangled members
Even of a dream some ligament
Should bind in reason; do not answer me
As once before, with some ear-tickling rhyme,
That like an echo, leads away from truth,
Deceives and cheats the listener. Who are you?

Neptune. I will not deceive you longer. I am he
That rules the sea, creating and destroying
Islands, shores and continents; and those
Who know me best, call me the varier,
My acts all whimsical, my reason folly.

Aliso. Are you that Neptune, whom the sailors fear,
And whom I do believe no more exists,
Than does the famed wind sailing nautilus?

Neptune. That is my name.

Aliso. And you're the mighty power,
That has begot this island?

Neptune. I am; and it shall sink, another hour,—

Aliso. And when it sinks, you say there is a boat?—

Neptune. One boat, and when I send for you,
Come quickly to the shore, where first you found the maid.
Now must I leave you here, and when I send
Obey, and come at once.

Aliso. In truth I am at fault, and know not whether
To laugh outright and in your very face,
Or make a doleful countenance,
And with the contract wrinkles of my brow,
So put a dismal face on the affair.

I'm sure the whole's a dream; ho, ho! ho, there!

Neptune. What are you calling, man?

Aliso. I'd wake the captain
Of my vessel; tell him I'm in a nightmare;
That post does cramp my knee; [Pointing Neptune.

I'd have it out,
Though the very cabin fall; yet hold!

I see a way: was I not in the wood,
And in a dream, and yet it did not break;
This is the second, and from it I can see
Th' entire first, thus are our dreams:
The first a semblance of reality so real
It has us all its own; the second
Brings a contrast with the first, is less a dream,
And at the third the swift progression ends,
And we awake to find them brain ferment,

Or true forewarning prophecies; come, sea-god,
Show me a hoof of your sea-swimming steeds,
Or crack your whip, or pouch your lips to blow
Your mussel trumpet, and I will believe you;
If not,—

Neptune. The gods that hearken to the calls of men,
Are weak; I leave you. Come when I send for you.
Be not o'er hopeful or o'er confident. [*Exit.*]

Aliso. I know not where, or how, or what to think;
To do I have no power. If 'tis a dream,
'Tis best to act it out as though 'twere real;
I will not break it; would I might dream on!
What was his aim? Why did he come to me?
I am not free, he told me to be ready;
Strange charge! methinks I'm ready; yet I believe
His very purpose was to tell his name;
Perhaps to frighten me, and fill my mind
With thoughts about this island—dreadful balance:
Each side with fear so carefully piled up,
That both hang even; one to lose this maid
And gain escape; O, weight too cheap to buy!
O, mix of ore and gold inseparable,
That one destroys the other's worth,
And both, by reason of their mixture, naught!
Again, that all's a dream; are dreams so circumstantial
And so nicely balanced? here to waken
Is t'escape this web of difficulty,
And leave a realm of darkness brightened
Brighter than the sun by this one maid.
The other ors I will not weigh; why should I?
They are too black, too mixed: one death,
One loss of this sweet love, no! from it all
I will have hope, for I have never yet

Seen difficulty's dark so deep and thick,
That some crack did not let the light creep in.

[*Curtain falls.*]

SCENE VII. *Same as Scene V. The Midst of the Feast. Persons, the same.*

Enter NEPTUNE, unobserved.

Alselo. The priest delays; he should be here e'er this;
He soon will make us merry; some there are
So skilled in arts, that hide beneath a cloak,
That they can bridle the swift-flying airs,
And in the chariot of darkness ride
Along the smoothed highway of the earth,
The sun their lackey, and the moon their lantern,
The stars the sparks struck from their horses' feet,
And in their magic race call out the spirits
For a light escort, and give us such
A merry ride, as will forever jolt
And shake and spoil our dumps, and dump them out,
And one of these is this same very priest.

Neptune. [*Aside.*] I'll call him spirits of another sort
Before I leave him. Here am I, a priest,
Brought hither to perform a ceremony,
But come with full intent to spoil the same
And execute one of another kind;
I would so near this knot to certainty,
That its appearance shall befright the bride,
Until, despairing, she shall say the wish
To be a nymph again; then should she know me?
It were better not; then would she seek
With supplications to unhinge my plan;
Yet must she know where lies her one escape;

I have 't: I'll call the spirit Thaliel;
She shall the missing bridesmaid represent,
And whisper to her constantly the words,
"Become a nymph, wish for your spring again;"
This will I do, then call some apparition,
Fright this baulky captain, save Aliso,
And it ail goes well. *[Enters among the rest.*

Alseldo.

We wait for you.

You know the purpose why I send for you:
To use your holy strings and wedlock here
This maid and this much traveled captain,
In a knot that only fateful scissors can uncut;
But boys begin to eat
As soon as hungry; we would not thus spoil
The good anticipation by much haste,
And first we seek to prelude with our mirth
This sober song of marriage; find what ways
May seem to you best leading to this end,
And show us these; but let them crook, meander,
Wander among flowers and resting places;
Thus will you please us best, for till the dawn
We would the mirthful marriage linger on.

Neptune. Those mirths are merriest, that are quickest
done;

Thus contradictions in your speech are shown:
You charge me here to hold away the birth
Of that from which alone can ripen mirth.

Alseldo. Then hold your course and quiet we remain,
And trust into your hands our guiding rein.

Neptune. It is your will this maid should wed?

Alseldo. It is.

Neptune. And this the husband?

Alseldo. The same.

Neptune. But this, the bride
Should have some bridesmaid at her side;
If your preparing has this fact o'er gone,
I can with but a word call hither one.

Alseldo. Do as you will.

[*Neptune calls Thaliel, who enters, approaches him,
then at his beck goes to Acne, and whispers to her.*

Acne. O go, beseech his aid.

Thaliel. It cannot be; this is your only hope.

Neptune. I have some light assistants near at hand;
Most worthy captain, if you here will stand,
And bind your fingers as your hearts are bound,
I'll call them hither at a tinkling sound,
To bless the planting of this hopeful spring,
With fruits and grains of Autumn harvesting.

[*They rise.*

Thaliel. O, nymph, remember that there is one way
And only one.

Acne. O, death! O, hateful wedding! .

Neptune. The ceremony done then mirth will come;
But 'tis a saying old, and tried and true,
That all the more is all the merrier;
Then will I call some naiads, nymphs and sprites,
To fill this emptiness and show us sights.

Thaliel. Remember.

Acne. No, forget! I will forget.

Neptune. You nymphs, whose hearts are cool as Summer
springs,
That beat their water through sand openings,
Whose faces fleet each look off through the sky
When cast upon them by a loving eye,
Untouched by love your hearts are ripe for mirth,
Bewreath yourselves, and from your beds come forth.

Enter NYMPHS with Black Veils.

What, have you lain so long upon the soil,
Your flowing tresses thus to mud and spoil?

Acne. O, this is pain, I will not be a nymph.

Neptune. You, naiads, that inhabit the cool brooks,
And greet the comer with soft bopeep looks,
And with mild whispered welcomes give him seat
Upon some grassy bench in shade retreat,
And bathe his feet, and wipe them with your hair,
Then form a double with your neighbor, air,
And sing duets until you charm his sleep,
You shall not now your modest dwellings keep;
Come forth, I call, who have the greatest power
O'er brookside dwellers, and I call this hour.

Enter NAIADS in Black.

Acne. I thank them for their gentle sympathy,
But their cool presence chills me.

Neptune. You nerëids, that sport within the sea,
And promenade on lawns of velvet moss,
And, habited in blue with hats of foam,
Ride races on the green sea dolphin's back,
Come leave your grottoes merges, meads, and plats,
And join us here in dance and Hymen's song.

Enter NEREIDS in Sombre Colors.

It seems that all earth's dwellers have conspired,
Our mirth shall be alone by black enfired.
One other caste of water habitants
I have perforce to call from out their haunts:
You river-gods, whose hair, like lions' manes,

Falls over your broad shoulders' rich demesnes,
Who, fearing breaches of your sea-joint ties,
Watch from the river mouths your boundaries,
And stir and load the passing waters full,
To build your bulwarks of alluvial,
Who, bold and coward, on your low beds hide,
To chase or fly the oft recurring tide,
Come forth; the nymphs await to take your arms,
And flatter and beguile you with their charms.

Enter RIVER-GODS.

Acne. O, have the waters of the earth and sea,
Come forth to view my sorrow ?

Thahiel. These are your sisters,
Cousins, uncles and dear relatives
Come here to rescue you, and lead you home.

Acne. I cannot go; strange power, the priest has on them!

Neptune. We next need Hymen; I will call him here;
Thou, Hymen, rioter in wedding cheer,
Usurper of the quiet reign of sleep,
Thou god, whose scattered visitations keep
The youth in longing for thy next return,
The old regretting thy last visit gone,
Come, with thy rings, thy kisses and thy tears,
Thy palpitating heart of hopes and fears,
And while thou bindest I will call the air,
To sing a song, and bless the bridal pair.

Enter HYMEN.

Thou air, that hidest in thy breast the dew,
Sweet pap the hungry ground sucks out at night,
Thou art the mother and the nurse of earth,

Dost know her character and judge her worth,
Embrace her blessings in a close bound word,
And let them from thy spirit's tongue be heard.

Acne. O, I will turn his blessings all to lies.

Thaliel. Remember, but a word can stop this play.

Ariel. [*Invisible*] I, who hold within my hand
All the light that flies the land,
Cannot sing of blessings' store,
While my heart with pain is sore;
Following the tracks of light,
When I loosed him in his flight,
On the shore I stopped and stood,
Where the sand was red with blood;
Call a spirit from elsewhere,
To sing the blessings of the air.

Neptune. These words are nothings; it will soon be done,
For with a word I will pronounce you one.

Beseech you, Hymen. [*Hymen approaches with the Ring.*

[*Thaliel rushes up to Neptune.*

Thaliel. O, stop! a knife! she took it from her breast,
And whispered to me, "this will give me rest;"
O, O! I fear she'll plunge it in her heart.

Neptune. Then it has failed. The last way must be tried;
Go, stand by her again; her love shall grow
Until it burst, love must itself undo. [*Distant thunder.*
Some other spirits are still necessary,
And that with haste; the morning is approaching;
Sing, sing.

Galiel. [*Invisible.*] E'er the heavens with morning glow
Will the sea this isle o'erflow.

Captain. Heaven! O heaven! the voice! the very same!

Galiel. Not a spot will land or shore
Show above the sea waves hoar.

Captain. The voice! do you hear it? what is this man? what sorcerer? what juggler? what ghost air is this?

Galiel. Vulcan's fire and heaven's thunder
Soon will spread your eyes in wonder.

Captain. What prophecy is this? What, Vulcan's fire! thunder! the isle shall fall! if I could feel the ship's deck under me! there is no safety on the land; it's all waiting to go down. [A flash of colored fire. Thunder.

It comes; did you see that fire? that was no lightning, it smells of sulphur.

Neptune. Thou pale-faced Hecate, mistress mother witch,
Whose favorite novel is the wayside ditch,
Wherein thou readest by the moon's eclipse
Strange tales of ghostly and land sailing ships,
With living passengers of frogs and snails,
Of lizard sailors spreading dock leaf sails,
Of salamander freight, and toads' toe claws,
And tadpoles' teeth insert in serpent jaws,
Come hither, leave thy interesting tale,
And show us here thy visage.

Captain. What man is this? this priest has come up from the lower regions.

Neptune. She does not come.
I court thy presence with more pleasing tone:
Come thou, that wanderest in the night alone,
Along the wayside to the three forked roads,
To sweep their delta for its dusty loads,
Each hound that scents thee, does howl thy breath,
And whine and wail an augury of death.
Come hither.

Enter HECATE.

Captain. O heaven! O! O!

[*Exit.*

Alseldo. What have you done? priest! priest! this goes too far.

Neptune. Go bring him back and soon the work is done.

Alseldo. I'll bring him; but you have your mark o'er-stepped.

[*Exit.*

Neptune. Quick, quick!

Enter GALIEL and ARIEL.

Go lead him off.

[*Exit Galiel.*

Go fetch Aliso. [*Exit Ariel.*

[*Thunder.*

The time approaches. Now have I that to do,
That were I heathen would disgrace the name:
To feed on love with its most fatty fuel,
That thus it may the sooner be burnt out;
A painful task but he who sees the end,
Must make all middles to his purpose bend.

Enter ALISO.

Come hither, take her hand; I now unite
In happy wedlock this much worried two,
And would their worriment were only through!
Why do you wait? here, here! what are you stiff,
As well as speechless?

[*Joins their hands.*

Hymen be their priest;

But let thy words be few as midday stars.

Hymen. I would not journey with o'er reaching haste
That lames herself, and turns her speed to waste.

[*Neptune turns aside in thought and takes no interest in what follows.*

Hymen. Wedlocked by the god of marriage,
You can never know miscarriage;
I alone to death and fate,
Yield myself subordinate;
Only this be cause for fear;
When fateful death shall slowly near,
Know then that my power is gone,
Here do I pronounce you one.

Acne. O joy!

Aliso. Dear earth!

[*They embrace. Acne's cloak falls off and discloses her dressed as a Bride. The nymphs take up the cloak, lay aside their black and sing.*

Chorus of Nymphs. Springs once dark with sorrow loam,
Now are white with joyful foam.

[*The Nymphs pass on. Neptune disappears and immediately returns as the Ocean God with his Trident, and stands as before. A Naiad sings.*

Naiad. See the ruler of the ocean,
Hasten we to show devotion.

[*The Naiads pass by Neptune and bow, followed by the Nymphs, Nereids, River Gods, and Thaliel, who all put off their black. The scene brightens. The Sailors sing. The Workmen join the promenade around Aliso and Acne, who stand embraced. The Gypsy Woman beats a Bell. The Gypsy Girl dances. Galiel, Ariel and Thaliel, opposite Neptune, crouch down in fear. A Flash of Lightning and Clap of Thunder brings silence. Aliso perceives and approaches Neptune.*

Aliso. O, Neptune, Neptune, I thank thee.

Acne. [*Perceiving Neptune.*] O death! O death!

[*Acne sinks down. Aliso stands speechless. Thunder.*

Neptune. The time is here.

This is no thunder of a passing storm;

Thaliel, thou hast performed my bidding:

These are the chariot wheels of mighty Jove,

Approaching to behold the closing scene.

O, all is fixed in fate unchangeable.

Take up the maid, and bear her to the shore;

The place I have before appointed thee.

Fear not the wind, the thunder or the fire.

What waits thee further shall be there made known.

[*Aliso raises Acne, and leads her away. The Stage becomes gradually dark and empty. Neptune remains alone.*

Neptune. A thought, thus fastened on a Summer day
Is followed out to fearful consequences.

Immortal nymph, had I not called thee forth!

Why do I fear? what are these dire results?

Are men so weak, this little play of grief

And joy alternate can o'er master them?

The small help planted for a wanderer

Has grown into this overshadowing tree.

The light foreseeing spirits, that I called,

Have changed their quarrels to confederate sighs;

It must be ended as it was begun,

Yet I foresee sad sequence e'er 'tis done.

[*Exit.*

ACT V.

By the Nymph's Grotto. Dark. Occasional Lightning.

NEPTUNE seated.

Enter PUCK.

Puck. Here he is, come follow after,
We will soon replenish laughter.

Enter FAIRIES.

Hist, the churl has testy grown,
And sits to meditate alone;
Shall we stir his ponderation?
Hark, I hear his lungs' inflation. [*They walk around him.*
By my thumb, I die to-morrow,
If he does not breathe of sorrow;
I have sworn by waves of styx,
A grieving man I will not nix.
March away with solemn tread,
The one that touches him is dead.
I will find another sport,
E'er the daylight us shall sort:
Ride will I the sway backed mare,
Bend her bones their utmost bear,
Plant a wattle upon the shoat,
And stretch the mooly's dew-lapped throat,
Graft another wart or two,
Upon her lip to make them show;
Roach the infant's cow-licked hair,
But leave a burdened man of care.
Fairies, slowly out begone;
Left foot, straw foot, one, two, one.

[*Exeunt.*

Neptune. Polite and gentlemanly Puck, I thank thee;
 My judgment has conceived new character
 Of thee; I thought to sink thee with thy troupe,
 But I am glad thou and the fairies canst,
 Upon a cluster of foam bubbles, float
 The boisterous waves; I'll send thee wafty winds,
 And bear thee to the distant world of men,
 Where thou may'st ply thy bandit trade on idlers.

Enter ALISO and ACNE.

Aliso. 'Twas here I found you was it not, dear wife?—
 This is the tongue's best word;—nay, do not fear.
 This is the place appointed; here I should meet him.
 Do not shiver at the stormy sea,
 Nor shrink back at the darkness, or the lightning.
 What are these to us? O I would tell thee,
 How my imagination has o'er leaped them all,
 And sped to Greece, to see thee there enthroned,
 And ruling by my side, thyself the aim
 Of all my people's blessings and my own.
 The ripest day hangs on my father's tree;
 That day when I shall lead thee to his stool,
 And ask his blessing on thy head and mine.

Acne. I cannot tell you,—O 'tis not the darkness,
 Or the lightning, or the sea, or storm,
 That make me fear; what, who, what man is this?

Neptune. Nymph, you know me, though you would not
 know me.

*[A Mountain in the background breaks out with a
 Light Volcanic Flame.]*

When you see me you sink down or shudder,
 When you should but smile and say, "the play is ending."

We meet here on the very moment: the fire
 Is breaking from the mountain; when it rises,
 Flashes, and dies out, this land will sink.
 I did expect to find a boat bound here;
 It comes;

[*A small boat comes along the shore; in it Thaniel.
 She lands the boat, and exit.*

and I am glad it happens thus,
 For your dilemma you can this way see.

Acne. Come, let us leave, or if you must, away
 And leave me here.

Aliso. Nay, do not fear;—
 Man, leave your hollow tones and mystic words,
 Nor ape the supernatural; here stands
 A gentle-hearted woman in the night time;
 Be circumspect, and tell us carefully
 Your good direction for our quick escape.

Neptune. When I speak,—

Acne.

O! O! his voice! come quick.

Aliso. Now am I on the eve of happiness:
 Dear wife, when trouble comes, or danger thickens,
 Then are the pasturing minutes of strong love.
 O, I can laugh at you; point out your fire,
 That puny plaything of a scene, make rough
 Your throat, or bristle up your hair,
 Or speak with direful mystery, what is it
 Now to me? each fear it wakens in her
 Tender soul gives newer cause of love;
 O, I could think, that in the door of death,
 The sweetest kiss, the tenderest embrace,
 The smile most winning, and the tone most loveful,
 Could be known; then is it that the tender words
 Awake no blushes telling lustful love;

Dear wife, here, thank him and the fire and darkness,
That they give me cause to put my arm about thee,
To say soft words, to cheer thee,—

Neptune. I do perceive a sorrow taking hold upon me;
It must not be; what once was fixed,
E'en in a flying thought, must be borne out;
I must impress on them belief and fear;
But how? this human shape knows nothing stronger
Than the heart's deep love; this conquers all;
Before this does the majesty of kings
Lie down a slave, and e'en divinity
Is powerless: now, could I stretch my hair
To radiating bands of darkness,
Call in my eyes two scintillating stars,
Put the loud sough and sigh of winds
Into my mouth, move like a cloud at night
And thus assimilate great nature's forms,
'Twould be in vain; what can be done
Shall be; I take the semblance of divinity,
And heaven, earth, sea, and fire, shall hearken me.

[*Recedes into the darkness.*]

Aliso. Here let us sit and wait the morning light.

[*She drops the knife.*]

What is this? a knife! why, what design?

Acne. Give it back to me; it may be
I must wear it longer; no, you may keep it;
I should not use it; I'm only a weak woman;
And yet I thought to: I hid it here before,—
Before I was to marry the sea captain;
But I would not have used it, I am sure;
Not while you were living; I'm too cowardly,
Too much afraid.

Aliso. Away, away such thoughts; why I must chide you;
Here, I'll throw it in the sea;—
No, I will keep it for you; a pleasant tale
You can begin from it hereafter:
How once a prince came to your island,—
But why should I tell it now? I'll keep the knife.

[*Conceals it.*]

Acne. When I see him, when I hear his voice,—
Tell me,—for sometimes merest little whims
Have meanings in them,—I have fore time stood
Beside a sunlit glowing waterfall;
And as a filmy veil drew o'er the eye,
And lent to nearness all the shapes of distance,
It suddenly took on a human form;
And clothed in fleecy veil and glittering,
It seemed to me to say, "Be not deceived
With sunny brightness, or with sparkling laughter,
My voice is sorrow and my heart is woe."
And there I often went, until at last
I wove a tale: how once a nymph, that loved
And lost her lover, to the mountain fled,
And hid behind this stream, to spend her day
Disguising thus her sorrow; tell me, O, tell me,
Will you think some time, if you should walk
Beside that stream, that you too hear her voice,
Her tone of sorrow?—

Aliso. Hush, hush! I will not listen. Here let us sit,
Beside this trifling boat, and I will tell thee,
To divert thy mind, that now seems bent
On sorrow, of a truth I do suppose
'Twould carry thee, and that's enough;
Then let us jest a moment, and suppose
That there were danger here, a real fire,

Then should'st thou here embark, and I,
 Thy oarsman, would as some light dolphin float,
 And bear thee on, and thou shouldst laugh and smile,—
 No, no, you are not smiling now; come, show me.

Acne. I cannot for thoughts,—

Aliso. Drive them away.

Acne. I must tell you,—

Aliso. I cannot listen to you;

For every tone makes me to look around,
 And clutch my fingers, knit and knot my arms,
 As though to fight away some hidden evil,
 That does set on you; *[Neptune approaches.*
and here it is.

Neptune. *[Aside.]* How make beginning, now this love is
 full,

To start it down the wane?—I would not fright,
 Or seek with puffed up words, or heightened mien,
 To over-awe you; but would seek to give,
 With some slight mix of sorrow, my earnest meaning
 Whereof you know a part; what more remains
 Now hear: It nearest touches this one maid,
 Who is, I pray you mark me well, not one
 Of earthly pattern, but withal a nymph,
 Who to beguile a passing hour I called,
 And did bestow on her this shape and semblance,
 And gave my fullest leave and power to use,
 To wake but some breath of a passing love.
 Of danger here you seem incredulous;
 I will but tell you plainly here is danger;
 From the which I would the maiden extricate;
 But 'twas an article by us agreed,
 That this should be but at her own expression.
 Yourself can mount this boat, which is with skill

So cunningly prepared, that it can float,
 Belying thus its looks, the roughest seas.
 Thus will what was begun a merest thought,
 A harmless play, all harmlessly be ended;
 Not so, the consequences are all dire.
 Here then, I turn to you, and say, bethink you
 Of your spring, and that the play is done.
 Do but repeat the words, "I would return,"
 And all is well.

Acne. O, fate! O, cruel, cruel fate!

Aliso. Ah, ha! a new turn now! new coloring!

Methinks I hear an unfledged advocate,
 Slow conning with impressive face a contract:
 The said J. B. does hereby give the said,—
 Thus is it that you formulate and sign and seal
 The contracts of the heart, including
 Proviso if, then so, if not, then so.

Dear wife, here, wait; methinks that in this gloom,
 Our minds take fright, and do deceive themselves,
 And think that shape of darkness is a man,
 Or better as his words would say, a god.
 'Tis laughable to fight a moving shadow;
 Yet I've heard that devils lurk in darkness;
 This shade persistently doth follow us,
 I would make proof of its consistency;
 Await me here.

[*Approaches Neptune.*

Acne. O, stop! you know not what!

Aliso. Sweet wife, I will but try him.

Acne. O stay! O stay!

Aliso. He has cheated and deceived me with false words.

[*Prepares to spring upon him.*

Neptune. Rash, fiery mortal, back; is it thus you try
 The powers that rule above you, seeking thus

With this high-minded daring, to o'erthrow
 Their fast set purposes? hark you, the gods!
 They are approaching to behold the end. [*Above, Laughter.*
 Listen to the slow approaching thunder. [*Thunder.*
 See the flashes of the mountain's fire. [*Flashes.*
 Hear the shrieks of frightened superstition: [*Shrieks.*
 The captain, sailors and inhabitants
 Bewailing their approaching death.
 Away! must I extend unto the limit
 Of my power, then may this monstrous pile,
 That does appear a mountain, crack its sides,
 And show my ministers, the black earth's slaves,
 Engaged here to draw from earth's deep veins
 Her minerals, to sate this fire's thirst.

[*The Mountain opens disclosing Dwarfs, Elves,
 Gnomes, and Smiths, in Red Light, carrying
 Buckets of Flame.*

Behold the monsters of the eager sea.

[*Monsters indistinctly seen.*

Beneath that veil of waves they reach their hands,
 To seize upon you and this falling island.

[*Aliso returns to Acne.*

I am the master of this little scene;
 Let this alone be to your minds conveyed
 By this brief spectacle, that shames my power
 With its own littleness; for should I stuff
 The god of day beneath the stool of night,
 And put the night's sick queen upon his place,
 Or thrust the diamond stars, brought down from heaven,
 In wayside holes, to simulate the eyes
 Of some low crouching vermin, and thus play
 With all the members of the universe,

'Twould soon be laughable, and wake derision
And not deep respect; yet must I show thee,
That this isle is mine; but let this scene
Enforce and verify my words. I now
Have tried what could be done; believe
And find your rescue, or persist and perish.

[Aliso, in thought, sits down near the water.]

Neptune. My pretty nymph, you simulate love well.

Acne. If this be show or seeming, what is real?

Neptune. Tell me, do you know what men call love?

Acne. To answer this is to belittle me;

I will not answer it.

Neptune.

I would but know,

For many say they love, and at their words
Their simpering faces fill with hallow blushes,
And the while they think they do avow
Some noble passion, they are all animal.

Acne. I do not know your meaning; I have not said
I love.

Neptune. But will you say it?

Acne.

I will not answer.

Neptune. Then must I put you to the proof: the proof
Of all things in this lower world is deed;
He, that with lusty lips says love, says naught;
As he, that swears affection, vows a promise,
Or doth with airy words deceive his soul,
That craves the good, does naught; I will speak plainly:
Would you save your lover you must lose
His love.

Acne. O, what!

Neptune.

My pretty nymph,—

Acne. Back, I am no more a child, a nymph,

A waterfall, a plaything; speak with me
As with a woman.

Neptune. Then be it so; love must
Itself undo: If he before your eyes
Shall live another hour, it is alone
By this, that you return to me.
When these few moments of his thoughtful mood
Are gone, he will come back to you with some
New made evasion, or persist he's dreaming,
Or find by crook or turn, some reasoned way,
To keep belief in his own fancy's wish,
And stay with you until it is too late.

Acne. O, dearest, dreadful truth!

Neptune. When he returns
You must have lost remembrance of him.

Acne. O, death! is there no other way?

Neptune. None, not one.

Acne. O, fate! O, cruel fate!
And must I speak to him cold heartless words,
And look a chilling smile?

Neptune. But you will not know it.

Acne. Low reasoner! shall I encase myself
Against the darts of pain, when each reflection
From my covering, doth dazzle, blind and kill
Him whom I love? no; better to uncase myself
Of this weak life; I'll do 't; that is the way;
He will return and find me dead. His kiss,—
O, I will feel his kiss; his warm lips' thrill
Will shoot across my cooling cheeks, and give them life,
A moment's life; then he will leave me here,—
O, fate!—but better than that other fate,—
And I shall see him go,—not see him, no,
But O, this is the way, the way.

Neptune. Not so; I have not thus, half blinded, looked it through:

Is this your confidence in him that loves,
That, like a low-born coward, he will shun the act
Of sacrifice, with your example near him?
I think I see him, yes, first kiss your lips,
And hang a moment o'er your face, and fly,—
Yes, fly to find some instrument of death,
And say, as once another lover said,
"Sweet wife, I lie with thee to-night,"
Then put the instrument in place,
And go to bed with thee.

Acne.

O, fearful truth!

O, that this love were weaker! true, 'tis true;
O, heartless truth! O, woful, wretched truth!
I must; O, death! O, tender, gentle death!
O, mother death! not you, not even you!
O, heartless, cruel! O, this face must smile,
This tongue must babble on, this hollow breast
Must wave, O, cursed face, and tongue and breast,
That must so bitterly tell lies to him!
I'll pierce my cheeks; one spot, one single spot,
Shall tell the truth, and say, "I lie, I love,
I could not die, O, save thyself for me."

Neptune. It is a bitter play.

Acne. Speak not this word again;

All is a play, if this is one: the world,
The mighty world, is but one bowling ball
Thrown at a mouse, and left to roll unnoticed.
O love, the awnings, that leaned out towards thee,
Cast fearful cooling shadows on my heart;
Now would I sit beneath them, were they rocks.
O love, that woke my sleeping womanhood,

Then left me here to die! O no, not death,
O, mix of thought! O, strife of soul! O! O!

Neptune. Sure, it doth affect me.

Acne. I'll think again how it will be: he will return,
And say, "dear wife,"—O, word, that chokes my thought!

"I have considered well: were I to leave thee,—

No, no, I will not think of this; come sit,

And wait, and when the sea flows in, O, joy!

I will enfold thee in my arms, we sink,

There are soft beds of moss below, what matter

If our sleep be long, we lie together,"—

O, death! and I?—shall prattle, as an infant,

In his face, his face, his face; until

His blood, that beats but loving me,

Shall curdle, and grow stiff and cold with hate.

O, worse than worst death! O, O! O, O!

Then will he curse me, O, sweetest curses from those lips I
love!

And leave me,—act, O act I long for, seek and loathe!

Neptune. You must be quick, he moves.

Acne. And I must say I would again be a cold-hearted
woman,

The merest nymph; I must control myself,

And say farewell; not even this, not one

Farewell, though I could put my hand in his!

O, you, who play thus with the hearts of men,

Say for me my farewell: say here I kneeled,

Show him this place, then call to him across

The wave, "farewell, she loved, she loved;" not this, not
this;—

I must bethink myself, not even this,

Poor, sickly, comfort can I have. O, woman,

That in the frailest form, encloses lions,

Fierce wild beasts of power, this is your trial,
This is your sacrifice. I will be calm,
Put back my hair, how shall I place my hands
To please him best, when he shall call me false
And perjured, heartless, cold, deceiving? death! O, death!
Here I will sit; no, I will stand;
Perhaps my head may fall upon his breast.
He wakens, he comes; O, Neptune! Neptune!
O, fiercest, fiery play! O, hateful life!
O, weary, dreary life, that I must say,—
Not say alone, must wish, to live again!
O, spring, O cursed Neptune, I would,
I must, I would return to thee again.

Neptune. I do almost think curses of myself;
Yet this way reason points her mighty finger.
I would almost I had not started it.
Sure they do wrench me with their little words;
But now 't must end all well. He comes. I must
With words make still more speaking this, her action.

Aliso. Dear wife, I have considered well; or no,
Not well or poorly; consideration lies not here;
I have but held my head upon my hands,
And thought one single minute of my father
And my kingdom and of thee.
But thou hast the over-balance, dost outweigh;
I will not go, nor will I hear these tales,
Nor once be frightened at their doleful sounds.
Some puffy scarecrow tries to frighten us;
But all the world is nothing to thy love,—
Methinks you love me,—say it once, dear wife;
Some way the word was stubborn to our lips,
And has not crossed them yet, and this did please me;
Words are but weakeners; but strange our moods!

For what we know full well, and doubt no more
 Than that the air we breathe is even air,
 We sometimes wish to hear, and do delight in;
 Tell me a moment now, thou lovest me;
 Say it simply, that we may but hear
 How little is its sound beside our love.

Acne. The willow, the brook and the sucking bee,—

Aliso. What, wife, dear wife, is this your answer?

Acne. The willow's shade

From the sun above,
 Where the brooklet played,
 Is the spot I love.

Aliso. What words are these? what babble at this moment?

Can you thus play with me?

O, you would but show me that you are not frightened;
 Well, this is well; this fire is nothing, for our love is all;
 But your hand feels strangely cold and limp;
 What can it mean? what can it mean?

Acne. Once heard I speak of hearts, of human hearts;
 'Twas on a Summer day,—

Aliso.

O what! O torture!

Neptune. [*Aside.*] It works upon him; yet he must not think

This be some wandering of mind, some weakness,
 But must a single moment think her
 A false-hearted woman. I do bewail the thought,
 That brought me to this pass; yet must I do it,
 E'en though I spend a year in cursing me
 To bring me satisfaction.—She has forgot you.

Aliso. O, cursed thought! O, speak.

Neptune. This was a play agreed upon; 'tis done,

The object is attained, your love is gained,
'There is no more, and she forgets you.

Aliso. O, fearful words! O, cutting, piercing words!
O, I was strong, and felt myself ensnared,
Most foolishly entrapped, and as the lion,
I might have said unto the passing mouse,
"My little fellow, stop; 'tis true I'm large,
And strong, and could these twine strings snap,
But they're so many, come, gnaw me out;"
But now, O now I am a sickly swallow
Drowning in the sea. Say 'tis not true;
Deny his words; what, cold and lifeless still?

Neptune. What shall I say? your sorrow reaches me;
Perhaps 'twas wrong; I'll not extenuate;
Would 'twere not so! perhaps if she had loved,
Had truly loved, perhaps,—enough, your fate,—
Say 'tis your fate; forget, and in this boat,—

Aliso. [*Shoves off the Boat, which disappears.*] It is the last
proof, that I scorn his words.
'Thus have I cut my moorings from the world,
And anchored fast to thee.

Neptune. What have you done?
Now all the gods of heaven cannot save you.
What motive have I now? my rein of power
Is slipped, and passion seizes the unguiding bit.
Now is my purpose foiled, O, woe the thought!
The best is by its excellence tripped up.
O, woful play, that tries the hearts of men!
Is there no way? I must bethink me well.

Aliso. Here, lean your head upon my breast, dear wife;
It was a jest to ask your love's confession;
See, I trust you all, and know you love me.

Acne. I know not love, O yes! I heard of hearts;

It was a spring; I lay and watched the waves,—

Aliso. Then it is true; O, cursed, wretched soul!
True! what is that's true? true that I found you,
A light-hearted maid upon the shore;
True, that you pitied my misfortuned state,
Then heard my tales, and did delight in them;
So much is true, yes more: you sought to aid,
Spoke mild, looked even love's beginnings
From your eyes; true that I saw, and first
I wondered at your way, thought it deception,
Too smooth to trust, and then believed; believed,
No more, that dew was poisoned, moonlight witched,
And friendship rotten; that the world was pure,
As your sweet life; 'tis true I loved; 'tis true
I thought you did return that love;—
O, cursed lie! 'tis true it was a lie;
Say is this true? be thou its testifier.
No word! then let me tell thee of thy lie;—
O, word, that I have spoke upon thy face,
That but an hour ago, no, not an hour,
Was my bright star, my light, my beacon light;—
I say it was a wrecker's luring flame.
Was this the salvage, that thou wouldst have gained,
To be denounced a liar by lips that love thee—
Yes! that love thee still! here lay thy head,
And let me whisper in thy ear thy lie.

Neptune. 'Tis sad to part them,—but a minute more,—
He holds her head,—

Aliso. Sweet pretty dear, you did dissemble well;
Most excellent! I could have sworn 'twas love,
All genuine; how prettily you said
Farewell, and worked your hands, said “stay a little,”—
Heaven! and in your secret soul were saying,

"See, it works, he feels, well done ! well done !
And I could swear your lips have now on them
That innocence that heaven calls perjury.
And then, O finest touch of all ! last shade !
Most delicate ! you hid this senseless knife,
That had it but a voice, had cried, " for shame,"
And showed it me, and said, O fool, O fool,
I was, O dupe,—and said, " I thought to use it,
But no, I'm weak,
I'm only a weak woman, not while your living,"—
My memory runs mad, and froths refusing
To remouth your words; weak woman,
By heaven, such weakness is the strength of devils.
Once more, I pray thee, let me kiss thy lips;
I'll say they're sweet, and were not made to lie,
Deceive, and then exult.

Neptune. Come, you must leave her.

Aliso. One more embrace, so sweet, so tender !
One smile, so winning ! one kiss, so loveful
And so damned ! [*Stabs her*]. There lie, thou falsehood,
Thou young life of fairest seeming, and of
Foulest substance; yet I will not curse thee,
Though the world is fairer that thy light is out;
And though my life be hollowed as the tree,
That feeds the fragrant gnawing sweet knot
To its heart and dies. [*Goes to the shore.*] Alone ! Alone !
My father, in a land alone I die.
O could'st thou hear my voice ! across the sea
I cry, " Alone, deceived, a murderer and lost.

Neptune. O woe ! O woe ! now all go wrong; dead, dead !
My pretty nymph ! my child ! O woe the day !
O death, unnatural, quick unforeseen !
O, had I seen his thought, and not his action !

Here he held her head, my innocent,—

Aliso. Call her thy fair demon, thy poisoned flower,
Call her not innocent.

Neptune. She was dear nature's child.

Aliso. Her life a lie.

Neptune. No truth so true as she.

Aliso. That lent herself to be thy minion!

O, charms thus used are iron's poisoned rust
Enameled! thus to feign, to seem to love,—O! O!

Neptune. No love so deep as hers.

Aliso. Now, curse thee, liar,
Thou saidst it was a play.

Neptune. O, play of love,
Of life, all true, all wrong!

Aliso. What play of love?
Didst thou not say and she forgets you?

Neptune. O, dupe! O, doubly duped! she must, she loved,
She sacrificed herself, her love, to save thee.

Aliso. Were't not thy words are choked with sorrow,
I would attempt to stop the utterance of thy throat,
That mingles air and lies.

Neptune. Here, here, she stood
While you were pondering with hanging head,
And here she died, not there, for here she said,
"I die in life, I sacrifice myself for thee;"
Then said farewell, and looked at thee, and strove
Such strife, such tearing strife; it did beshame me;
Then knelt, and said, "show him this place,"—
Here, here, I show it thee; here, here, she knelt,
And said farewell to thee, and life and love;
Now, art thou man, weep tears of double brine.
Why standest thou, as some mute block of stone,

Had I thy voice grown used to wail and groans,
I'd stretch its power now.

Aliso. What did you say,
She kneeled?

Neptune. Here when I told her, "if you love,
Do truly love, you must your love renounce,"
Then pointed her the way for thy escape,
This only way, this boat and told her
You would stay and die with her, find some pretence,
Mistrust the danger, then she thought of death,
Called, "gentle death," then feared you might not flee,
Then yielded up her little interest in life,
To live life worse than death; then knelt,
And begged, "say for me my farewell,
And say I loved, O, call across the sea
To him, she loved, she loved;" O, weep, now weep.

Aliso. There is a time when tears deride themselves;
When words fly off at each approach to th' matter;
Methinks that time has come, or if there be
Words for the herd of men, to brand their faces,
Name their characters, these words are taken
From the shops of life; let's call them butchers.
Fie! O heaven! no, no! did you say begged,
Said, "say farewell?"

Neptune. Alas! alas! what, not a tear?
This tale should slake and soften up a stone.

Aliso. No tears! the way is easy now;
No tears; why should one weep? you say she loved,
Then I will venture once to see her face. [*Kneels.*
Not spoiled! O no, thy butcher did not rip thy face.
I kissed thee once, I'll kiss thee once again.
Say did I call her wife? a downy bed!
Attentive waiter! and a flaming candlestick!

Not by thy side; the slaughterer
Shall not lie with his slain [*Rising.*] and yet 'twere meet
I think, but for a moment.

Neptune. I have bethought me, say farewell, be quick,
Though all is fixed, I will endure derision
From all gods of heaven for a change.
Come, quick, while yet remains a way.

Aliso. Thank heaven for this word; I will persuade myself
That I am free, with all the world before me;
That it were growing night, and not as now
Light dawn just peeping through the eastern clouds;
That I were weary, and not as now, well girded
With a journey's strength; and that I sought
My couch,—

Neptune. Come quick!

Aliso. Nay, hear me out,—where lay
My love, and that her hand was laid upon
My breast, and not as now cold steel
That shivers it. [*Stabs himself.*]

Neptune. Stop, stop! O woe, unspeakable!

Aliso. Let me not lie beside her, I fain would
Grant myself this wish, but no, I am not worthy.
Let me lie here, here where she kneeled,
With but my face toward hers. [*Dies.*]

Neptune. Now let there be a general rain of woe:
All drench and drown; my purposes, O woe!
Here, has it come to this? an idle hour,
A thought, a purpose fixed, and all have ended
In this heap of woe. At times I thought
'Twas merest comedy, not deep enough
To fill the gaping mouth; again it seemed
A spectacle too tame to lead the eye;
But through it all, soaked on this seap

Until it did induce this flood of woe.
Alas! and all's not done—the isle must fall,
Or I must lose the simple name of character.
I will not look upon it, yet I hear the gods;
For them, alas! 't must be; but I'll envelop
In a cloud of darkness, shutting out
From me this sight, this isle of woe, alas! [Shrieks.

Enter ARIEL, GALIEL, THALIEL, *rushing in.*

Ariel. O, fearful spectacle! the island sinks,
They rush together, run like mad,
Alas, the fire! and strike and beat each other
In their crazed fury, alas! alas!
O spare them, spare them.

Neptune. Speak quietly, tell what you mean.

Ariel. The island sinks; the captain, sailors, workmen,
All, all are drowning; and up above their heads
The air, the winds, are laughing at them.
O, save them; hast thou not a heart?

Neptune. It cannot be, they shall go down.
Look you our blighted purposes.

Galiel. Alas! alas!

Ariel. O woe!

Thaliel. Ah me, the day!

Galiel. The pretty maid!

Ariel. And he!

Thaliel. My master!

Galiel. I did forebode.

Ariel. I saw.

Thaliel. And I.

Galiel. Alas, the maid is dead!

Ariel. O woe, my hero slain!

Thaliel. Why does my master weep?

The Three. Ah me! ah us! we saw, we saw, we foresaw.

Neptune. Not all your natures thin almost invisible
Saw not themselves, nor their own destiny.

The Three. O woe! O, what?

Neptune. Thou, Ariel, that hast my purpose served,
Canst fly through air, that is thy being's substance,
To thy rescue. Thou, my Thaliel,
That art the moving semblance of the sea,
Canst refuge in thy native element.
And thou, fair Galiel, alas! alas!

Galiel. Ah me! O woe! I fear.

Neptune. Had I a part, an unused corner in my woe,
I'd save't, and give it thee.
Unfortunate of birth, thou must be wrapped
In darkness and in drowning death.

Ariel and Thaliel. O woe! alas! alas! poor Galiel!

Neptune. Betake you to your elements; alone,
My child, my spirit, here, alone,—

Galiel. O, could I weep! O death! O icicle!
O, melt my eyes. O! O!

Ariel. Farewell! farewell! [*Exit.*

Thaliel. The day! the woful day! [*Exit.*

[*Thunder.*

Neptune. Sist! down! had I the voice to give command
Unto the moving elements! now robe yourselves
In gloomy night, put out your glowing flame,
Woe is unspeakable and thunder tame.

[*The mountain flashes. The island sinks in darkness, amid the noise of winds, water, thunder and shrieks. Laughter above the scene.*

O, desecration! hark, I come, I come.

[Spoken from the darkness, accompanied by the noise of winds and waves.]

All, all is mystery, and all is fate,
And all is woe: woe! woe! whose purposes
Are set on realms of earth, their glow and glitter
Dazzle and grow hateful to his eyes;
Woe! woe! the destinies of men catch fire
At some unguarded spot, and soon their thread
Is burned to ashy death; woe! woe! who plays
Along the light-breezed borders of a love,
Soon, soon, the swelling sails are filled, the blasts
Burst in, his bark is borne to quick unawned death;
Woe! woe! to him, that in the restless play of life,
Uneasy dweller of its tired sea,
Grasps floating threads of thought, and binds them fast,
Their end is merged deep in fated death;
Woe! woe! my nature light and changeable
Is henceforth fixed, staked fast to rocky woe.

[The first scene of the play emerges from the darkness.]

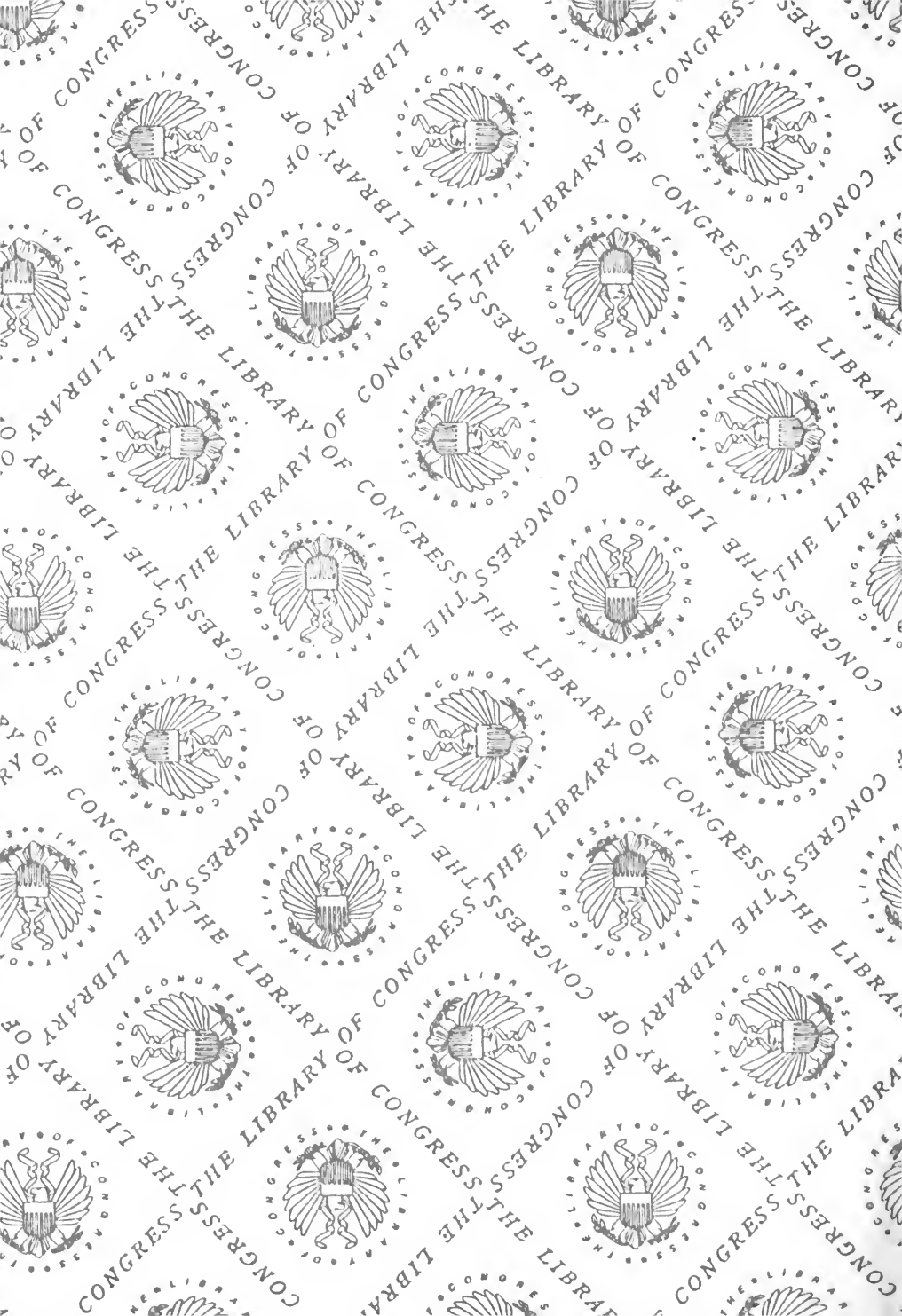
The Gods. Ha! ha!

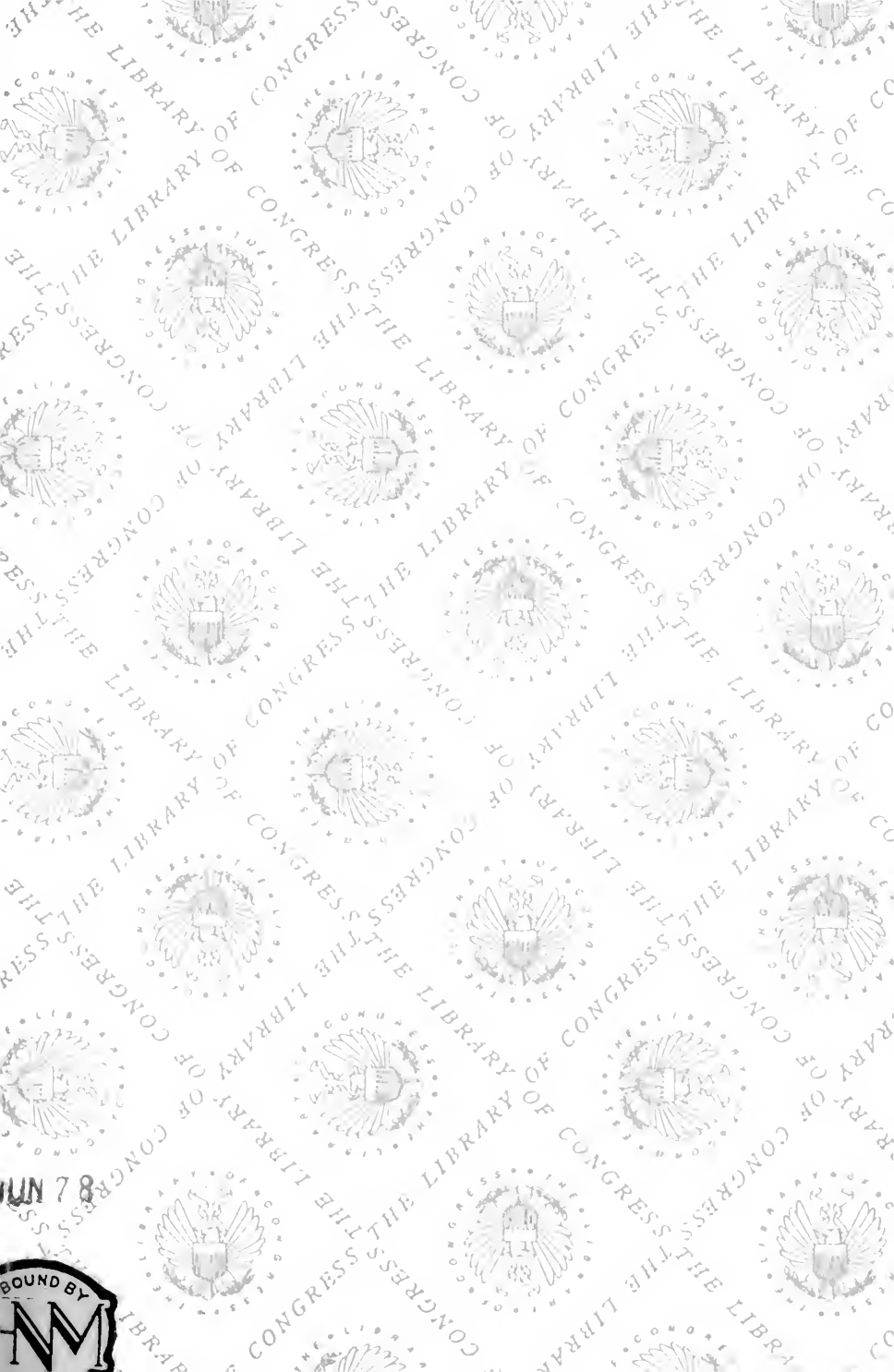
Neptune. Sist!

'Twas yonder in the sea; beneath whose deep,
Or in whose cradled hollow I may be,
Henceforth I find alone one voice, one sound,
That sings of woe; of woe for man, whose life is played with
By the restless gods, whose heart is toyed with
By the greater majesty of love.

[Exit.]

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